

3 2769 01 102 837



NAZARETH COLLEGE OF ROCHESTER

Talbot, Francis Xavier, ed
Fiction by its
makers.

Call No. 808.3

Tal

Accession No. 9871

Regulations

Any pupil of Nazareth College
may take books from the Library.

Each book may be kept two weeks, ex-
cept books in great demand, which may be
restricted to one week. A book that may be kept
two weeks may be renewed for two weeks more on
application, unless it is reserved for another borrower.

Each book kept overtime is subject to a fine of two
cents a day until its return.

Books should be examined for mutilations, etc., at
the time of borrowing, as the last borrower must be
held responsible.

NAZARETH COLLEGE LIBRARY



FICTION BY ITS MAKERS

FICTION BY ITS MAKERS

Edited by

FRANCIS X. TALBOT, S.J.

Literary Editor of AMERICA

DISCARDED
HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY

The America Press
New York

9871

Copyright, 1928, by
The America Press

Imprimi Potest:

EDWARD C. PHILLIPS, S.J.
Provincial Maryland-New York

Nihil Obstat:

ARTHUR J. SCANLON, S.T.D.,
Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:

PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES,
Archbishop of New York

To

Thomas F. Meehan

Editor, Historian, Friend,

Who, Associated with *America*

From Vol. I, No. 1, P. 1 on,

Has Won the Gratitude and the Affection

Of All the Past and Present Editors

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	
<i>Francis X. Talbot, S. J.</i>	1
AGNES REPPLIER	
The Novel Reader	8
HILAIRE BELLOC	
On the Novel	15
KATHLEEN NORRIS	
Religion and Popular Fiction	23
RONALD KNOX	
The Catholic Novel	31
RENÉ BAZIN	
Some Thoughts on the Novel	37
MONTGOMERY CARMICHAEL	
Nature and Grace in the Novel	46
ENID DINNIS	
The Supernatural in Fiction	53
EMILE BAUMANN	
The Catholic and Supernatural Novel	60
COMPTON MACKENZIE	
The Trend of the Novel	71
HENRY BORDEAUX	
The Art of the Novel	86

M. E. FRANCIS	
The Modern Novel	94
FRANK H. SPEARMAN	
The Catholic Novelist	102
LUCILLE BORDEN	
Why "Catholic" Novelist?	113
ISABEL C. CLARKE	
The Apostolate of the Novel	122
ELIZABETH JORDAN	
The Romantic Novel	132
G. K. CHESTERTON	
The Novel with a Purpose	143
C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.	
Confessions on Novel Writing	152
EDITH O'SHAUGHNESSY	
The True Book of Adventure	162
JAMES B. CONNOLLY	
Cooper and Stories of the Sea	171
WILLIAM HEYLIGER	
Writing Fiction for Boys	179
FRANCIS J. FINN, S.J.	
The Boy and the Story	186
BIBLIOGRAPHY	195

FICTION BY ITS MAKERS

INTRODUCTION

FRANCIS X. TALBOT, S.J.

PROFESSIONAL moralizers sometimes grow very impassioned in their condemnation of the modern novel. They speak of the novel, it may be noted, and not of the novels because they probably have read a novel in the course of the year. They prefer to describe the novel in resounding polysyllables since long words supply the lack of thought admirably. The guardians of consciences find that the modern novel is the apotheosis of paganism, that it is a panegyric of pornography and a panderer to lasciviousness, that it is extremely deleterious in its baleful influences. At times they conceive of it as a "flood of filth" and then as a "mass of fetid realism." They are justified in their charges against the modern novel, for last year there was actually published a novel that deserved such abuse. In fact, there were two or three such novels, and the moralists must have had one of them in mind. They could not have meant to condemn so roundly all or even a great part of the recent novels.

There is no such thing as the modern novel. But the term is used loosely to designate all

those disparate types of fiction that have been published in these later years. Thus accepted, the modern novel cannot be modified truthfully by any single adjective. It is just as false to call the modern novel filthy as it is to describe the human race as white. The modern novel may not be summed up as sensuous and it may not be put down as ennobling. Novels published today are decadent and they are as inspiring as the lives of the saints. There are quite as many of the one type as there are of the other. The modern novel can be characterized only in the way that little Mary described the zebra. She was not sure whether "it was a black horse with white stripes or a white horse with black stripes." Unlike the impartial attitude of Mary is that of the dour critics of the modern novel. Because some modern novels are evil, they judge the modern novel to be an unmitigated evil.

Taking the most tolerant view of it, the modern novel in its dominant effect cannot be called wholesome. This is due to the fact that the philosophy of living which the novelists have formed for themselves is not thoroughly orthodox. The moral content is the most important phase of any novel. And the morality of a novel cannot escape being the expression of the moral code of the novelist. Just as the novelist cannot live ten minutes actively without acting accord-

ing to some expressed or implicit code of behavior, so he cannot write ten words without betraying his code. Though he may not professedly adhere to any set of Methodistic commandments and though he may abhor all Puritanic precepts, inevitably he devises some personal, workable rule of action even though he does not formulate his rule in words.

He is under the same necessity in writing his stories. He cannot be a sensitized plate in a camera and register only external appearances. His sensitized faculties have already registered innumerable appearances and they can be sensitive to new ones only so far as these are in accord with past impressions. The novelist is forced to narrate not what he sees but how he sees it. Each individual sees things in his own peculiar way. From this vision is deduced interpretation. Hence, no novelist can be objective in that degree to which some French authors have aspired. A personal philosophy of life must color every sincere novel.

As a result, every novelist is a propagandist of some sort. He may not preach his doctrines blatantly but he has not power to suppress them completely. It is principally in his characters that he betrays his moral outlook on life. I do not mean to say that the novelist is necessarily autobiographical in his heroes and his villains. But he cannot possibly create a character with-

out materializing in some degree those moral qualities which he himself possesses either in a repressed or in an active state. After he has conceived a well-defined character, the novelist cannot wholly dissociate himself from its actions and its opinions. He does not sink into the role of neutral observer. He remains the omnipotent divinity directing the career of this creature of his brain. He is at one and the same time its guardian angel and its evil spirit. It becomes quite obvious, then, that the novelist cannot possibly develop a character coherently, unless he has previously formed his own moral code.

In the choice that he makes of his situations and his plots, the novelist inevitably faces a host of moral and ethical problems. He treats of the period of courtship and he is obliged to decide upon the limitations that are to be placed upon pre-marriage familiarities. He marries his hero and his heroine; he may transport them into paradise but he must determine precisely how much of their happiness can well be expressed in print. Or he may marry the villain and the heroine; shall he snap the bond with a scrap of paper obtained from the divorce court or shall he ennoble the heroine by adding martyrdom to her other glories? He sets himself the task of investigating the troublesome "younger generation;" and he immediately en-

tangles himself in the relationships that should exist between parents and children. He writes of business life and must settle ethical problems, of factories and must judge of sociological ills, of social life in general and must apply God's law and man's law in the smallest details. The novelist works in an arsenal that is packed with bombs of moral significance. He cannot write vitally unless he is a teacher and a moralist, and even a propagandist.

Since Catholics can accept only one code of morals it follows that they can wholeheartedly approve of only one class of novels. They do not require that these novels be written by Catholics; otherwise, they would exclude a great proportion of splendid books being published by sincere and competent artists. But they do feel that ordinarily they can approve more completely the content of novels composed by Catholics since they are more likely to find that the moral problems have been solved without offense to Catholic teaching.

Happily, the group of novelists who make the Catholic philosophy of life the groundwork of their fiction is steadily increasing. Never before in English literary history have there been so many and such brilliant Catholic novelists. In technical excellence they are easily the equal of their contemporaries; in moral significance they are decidedly superior. This group of

novelists is supplying types of stories that appeal to the most varied tastes. Among the American representatives, for example, are James B. Connolly with his tales of the sea, Elizabeth Jordan and the romantic mystery stories to which she has been devoting her talents in recent years, Kathleen Norris and her "best-sellers" on family and home, Edith O'Shaughnessy with her analyses of married life, Frank Spearman and his stirring novels of adventure and business, Lucille Borden, who makes religious truth the basis of her fiction, and for the younger people William Heyliger and Father Finn.

In Great Britain a longer list of Catholic novelists could be drawn up. Even a brief enumeration would include, at least, Ernest Oldmeadow, Compton Mackenzie, Sir Philip Gibbs, John Ayscough, G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Montgomery Carmichael, Ronald Knox, Richard Dehan, Enid Dinnis, Isabel C. Clarke, Maurice Baring and Shane Leslie. In France, there are no novelists whose work is superior to the Catholic Bazin, Bourget, Baumann and Bordeaux. Ireland has had no fitting successor, as yet, to Canon Sheehan, though Daniel Corkery is writing a prose as distinguished as may be found anywhere. But with Ireland's anguish over, a Catholic renaissance,

in contradistinction to the present literary clique, is undeniably quickening.

Because there are Catholic novelists of rare power abroad in our midst, and because their views on the ideals of their craft are significant, this series of essays was projected. All of the articles were published first in the columns of *America*. They are reprinted here without change and with no comment, though many of them did provoke lively controversy. It is not too much to hope that in their new form the essays may continue to suggest points of difference.

THE NOVEL READER

AGNES REPPLIER

THE trouble experienced by the twentieth-century journalist is that all themes have grown too big for handling. How can he write about internationalism when he knows the Balkan boundaries only on a freshly tinted map? Or about science, when daily discoveries tread on each other's heels? Or about archeology, when every spadeful of upturned earth uncovers a buried city, or a brand-new prehistoric man? Or about Christmas gifts, when a publisher of juvenile literature alludes casually to the thirteen hundred new books for children which have recently come under his notice? Or about novels, when a stout-hearted American critic has gathered into a single volume his estimate of ninety American novelists? That any man should have a mind capacious enough to harbor ninety novelists, and know them apart, is a marvel too great for the telling.

Yet, after all, what are ninety novelists distributed among millions upon millions of novel readers? No one can fathom the need of the modern man, and, in a lesser degree, the modern woman, for fiction. We all seek some

avenue of escape from a world of gigantic, oppressive and unmitigated facts. Wine, which for centuries softened the hard edges of reality, is denied us. Tobacco is left (on sufferance only), and music, and the drama, and poetry (for a few), and fiction. Tobacco and novels are natural allies, just as wine and companionship used to be, and we do well to recognize our debts. John Middleton Murry, an English critic, assures us solemnly that prose fiction is the only vital and comprehensive literary form today—a disputable statement, and one which does not deeply concern us. Reading is not a duty. It is a human delight, or it is nothing.

The harshest criticism of the American novel is that it depends too much on moral idealism and romantic love. Neither of them is a bad thing in its way, though the moral idealism will not bear a too heavy emphasis, and the romantic love does not lend itself to scrutiny and dissection. Moreover, a man's moments of idealism and of love are as brief as they are beautiful. The world that we know is full of people who are not in love at all, whereas the world of fiction is full of people who are in love monotonously and continuously. An American scientist has calculated that the average citizen sleeps 250,000 hours of his life; but is exceptionally fortunate if he is conscious of being in love for 50,000 hours. A very few hours suffice for

other dominant emotions, and the remainder of his time is spent in adjusting himself to his environment, or in struggling to escape from it.

The last sentence is full of significance to the novelist. It is man in relation to his environment that gives color and substance to fiction. Human behavior makes life what it is, and human behavior can be measured only in terms of adjustment or escape. The American novelist is favored, in so far as he can present many contrasting environments, some of which have the added charm of impermanence. If the conditions under which he lives, and which he necessarily reproduces, are often cramped and sometimes crude, if he, like the rest of us, is oppressed by our silent past and by our deafening present, he has by way of compensation, the handling of fresh material; he can give an intelligible report of things not staled by usage. His trend is to the fertile lands rather than to the parched deserts of fiction; and what he loses in finesse and form, he gains in straightforwardness and veracity.

The lamentable growth of indecency in modern fiction cannot be ignored by the commentator. It is curious because it is for the most part painstaking. The early English novelists took their indecency as they found it. There it was, and there they said it was, without concealment, but without elation. They knew nothing about

sex psychology as revealed by science; but they knew a great deal about sex psychology as revealed by the circumstances of life. They did not see the world in terms of sex any more than they saw it in terms of socialism, or of pacifism, or of Prohibition. They saw it in its everyday aspect, grim yet gay, evil yet good, and with a natural bias towards sanity. The novel as a study of passionless lusts was as remote from their field of endeavor as was the novel of uplift, warranted to rehabilitate the soul.

One thing is sure. That vague entity, the average reader, does not like indecent novels any more than that vague entity, the average theater-goer, likes indecent plays. The novels that have sold by the tens of thousands are for the most part of an estimable propriety. The plays that have run year after year as though they were permanent institutions are for the most part innocent of offense. We have been told by a distinguished alienist that prurient fiction, especially prurient introspective fiction, is frequently of great value to him and to his colleagues, because it reveals much which before could be learned only through the imperfect records of an insane asylum. This is of course a path to usefulness; but it is not what the normal man or woman craves as recreation. The nervous exhaustion which follows in the wake of broken commandments is the proper study of

the physician and of the confessor; but it is not of lively interest to the layman. There are a great many fairly intelligent Americans, who, though they may not read William James, yet feel with him that life, sanely conducted, involves certain refusals and renunciations of freedom, and who therefore share his taste for books which embody some measure of self-respect and self-control.

In the ancient feud between the determinedly cheerful and the determinedly cheerless novel, the sagacious reader refuses to take sides, because he distrusts both points of view. He will not be happy with the gladsome novelist whose pretences are too thin and feeble for support; and he will not be miserable with the soured-soul novelist, having no natural taste for despondency. What Joseph Hergesheimer calls "the humanitarian welter of the nineteenth century" may have been fatal to the aloofness of art; but it had in it a human and vigorous quality. The Victorian giants walked the earth with proud and heavy steps. The fiction of today is too pitiless a reflection of the inferiority of men and the futility of life. Men are often inferior, it is true, and life seems sometimes futile; but this blurring of the Divine scheme is not the final word, the last analysis of truth. The novelist who grasps the relations of human beings towards one another, and towards the imperious

fact of existence, invariably finds some light in the dimness, some reassuring traits engendered and nourished by harsh, bright contacts with the world.

To exclude the power and passion of religious sentiment from fiction is to rob it of one deep source of inspiration, and of one broad avenue of approach. When Santayana speaks of "those human passions to which the religious imagination has always given a larger meaning and a greater depth," he throws a searchlight upon the emotional history of the world. Down through the centuries come the vibrations of human passion, illuminated by the religious imagination. In the best story ever told the world, the story of Joseph and his Brethren, we see the uttermost limits of baseness and loyalty, of statecraft and simple affection, made plain and clear in the suffused light of a powerful religious belief. When Joseph said to his perfidious, but contrite Brethren: "Fear not. Can we resist the will of God?" he compressed into a minimum of words a stupendous philosophy of life.

The novel writer is a person of pride; the novel reader is a person of becoming humility. He has a sense of grievance if he is bored, and a sense of disgust if he is sickened; but he has also a sense of lively gratitude if he is entertained, and a very real affection for those novels

that have become old and tried friends, read and reread in moments of tranquil enjoyment, endeared by familiarity, and by a perpetually renewed delight in their perfections. The novel writer is sometimes a very ardent and generous novel reader. Thackeray so loved novels that he made sure all other men "with healthy literary appetites" must do the same. But Henry James, being by disposition and habit a reader of history, was correspondingly impatient with fiction. There is in history a tragic intensity of human interest which sets the mind on fire. In its "mapped lands and charted waters" we follow the orderly development of the race. In its pageant and philosophy is revealed the fearless soul of man. The novelist may be and should be a serious artist; but he is not, luckily for himself and for us, a serious chronicler of events. He has a wide field in which to disport himself, and only one essential duty to perform. "I hope," writes an eminent but modest novelist of today, "that it will not be considered a wilful eccentricity on my part when I say that the highest merit a novel can have is readableness."

ON THE NOVEL

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE modern novel has taken a prodigious extension during the lifetime of the present generation and especially in countries of English speech (with the exception, I believe, of Ireland).

It has grown largely to the detriment of other forms of literature, in England at least. If you compare, for instance, the railway bookstall of a large English town with the corresponding one in a large French town, one of the first things you will remark is the considerable proportion, in France, of works on travel and science, on religious and political discussion, on history, even on criticism, at popular prices. Such works in England are hardly ever present, or present in such very small numbers they do not count. There is no popular sale for them, comparable to that of the Continent. Now and then, indeed, a particular series has quite a success, though it includes no fiction, but there is little general and regular sale for individual cheap works which are not works of fiction.

Similarly there is no economic basis for the trade of writing outside fiction and school text-

books. The market for the latter is with us so artificial and kept to so close a corporation that it can hardly be counted as literature. We have, then, for popular literature, in England, at least, hardly anything but the novel; and the numbers of the novel have increased out of all reason. A member of one great publishing house of my acquaintance boasted to me that they published three novels a day during their season.

I have seen this huge flood or spate of published fiction put down to many causes, most generally to the compulsory popular education now, in England, rather more than fifty years old.

I agree that it is compulsory popular elementary education which has done it, but I think in a very different way from what is usually imagined. It is not that a vastly increased number of people can read. The number of people in England who could read thirty years ago (the number at any rate of those of the novel-buying age) was just as large in proportion to population as it is now, while the output of novels and the purchase of them was far less. What I think popular education has done is to dull, and, in very many of its victims, to kill keen interest in intellectual things. I know from my own experience that there is no comparison between the intellectual power of the old people in my part of the country whom I can well re-

member and who had not come under the mechanical pressure of this modern socialistic State machine, and that of the new generation. The old generation of peasants were far and away keener and more intelligent, more active in mind, than the young people of our present town populations who have come under the steam roller of the Education Acts. The habit of reading, when you do read, thoroughly—and of reading matter which makes you think—has declined. It is further declining. This comes no doubt from a great number of causes. It is part, perhaps, of a universal movement whereby the whole of our civilization is declining in taste, in the intellectual examination of problems, in clarity of thought. But apart from the general downward trend, which affects reading as it does everything else, I think one can point to this one specific cause of a decline in the reading of books requiring intelligent concentration, and call that cause the modern elementary education imposed by the State.

It is next remarkable that this huge flood of popular fiction is in no way discriminated into rational categories. There is not a greater sale for a better work, nor a less sale for a better work. The best seller is not necessarily a contemptible book; the very best work often sells exceedingly well and the very worst is continually neglected. What is remarkable is the lack

of any correspondence between large sale and workmanship. A definite proof that this is the case may be found in the impossibility which any publisher will describe to you of reviving the good early work of a popular writer.

If it were exercise of judgment on the part of the mob which created the best seller—even some vague half-conscious exercise of judgment—if the mob were saying to itself, "Here is a man whom I admire; who teaches me something," or even if it were to say to itself, "Here is a man who provokes my curiosity," then the similar, and usually better, earlier work of the same man, once the mob had discovered the author, would appeal to it. It never does. A man having become a best seller will try in vain to sell his earlier work. At least the exceptions are so few that they only prove the rule. Much the best work that H. G. Wells ever did was "The Time Machine," and I have not heard of any great popular demand for that. The best work, I think, that Hutchinson ever did was the work of his youth—which no one now asks for.

One can only conclude, therefore, that the popular demand is haphazard, following no rules, but a sort of blind "line of least resistance." The popular mind seems to have become so dazed with this continual bombardment of fiction that it will accept almost anything short of two bad qualities, which the popular mind very properly

rejects. One is lack of theme, lack of story; the other is obscurity of style.

I have sometimes wondered whether this cataract of popular fiction now thundering upon the heads of the English-speaking millions, affects their minds or not. I am inclined to think not. I am inclined to think that it reflects their minds, but does not affect their minds. You will note that it never has more than half a dozen themes and all those themes are based on the same sort of philosophy (if it can be called a philosophy) as you will find in the daily press. You will further note that any description of the wealthier classes as they are fails to achieve popular sale, but the description of an imaginary wealthy class secures one of the commonest forms of a large circulation. You may further note that it is so with foreign countries. Popular fiction describing foreign countries as they are always fails; a conventional picture corresponding to one already in the mind of the reader is necessary to its catching hold. When, therefore, good people deplore the futility or worse of this mass of modern fiction I cannot agree with them. It seems to me that the whole torrent is a follower and not a leader.

In this I am confirmed by the attitude of the populace towards the very few things it buys and which are not fiction. Take for instance

the popular writer, Mr. Wells, to whom I have just alluded. He has had a very great, though ephemeral, popular success with his "Outline of History." Now the mark of his book is that it gives the average non-Catholic reader no idea he did not already possess. It is full of *clichés* from the half-educated popular "Science" upon which the great mass of his readers has been brought up. Had he told them some historical truth which disturbed those doctrines of theirs—for instance, had he told them that the Catholic Church was the maker of European civilization—or had he distinguished between vague guesses and ascertained truth in pre-history, he would not have sold. It is one of the principal marks of the difference between what passes for instruction today and the highly disciplined intensive instruction of the past, that the former must be agreeable to the pupil, while the latter was imposed upon the pupil. And that is only another way of saying that the old teaching taught and the new teaching does not. To make a seal you impress the stamp on the wax. If you try pressing the wax on to the stamp you get a very inferior result.

Will this vast extension of popular fiction continue? I doubt it. I think there will be a collapse. I was saying as much in the *New Statesman* of London the other day; and though I know it is impossible to prophesy in human

affairs yet it does seem to me that everything is making that way: that everything is making for a perhaps rapid disappearance of the novel.

I notice that in the past very popular forms (the printed Calvinistic Sermons, for instance, of England and Scotland, the moral poem, the eighteenth-century farce) went through a regular cycle, growing first rapidly, then extravagantly, swelling out like a balloon—and at last bursting. They exhausted their matter; they became repetitive. Their public got to know all about them and got weary of knowing all about them. At any rate, for whatever causes, they failed. The novel has gone through all the first part of this cycle up to the swollen stage and I think it very probable indeed that it will go through the rest. I see no reason why it should not.

I hope I am not here falling into the error of making the wish father to the judgment. It is an error I dislike very much in others, and which I try to avoid in myself. It is a better habit to expect the worse than to expect the better, and it certainly fits in far more exactly with the nature of this world and with reality as we know it. No, I do not think that I am prophesying the breakdown of the modern novel within, say fifty years, because that would obviously be a good thing. I believe myself to be prophe-

syng that happy event from a process of reason, or rather of analogy.

What has hapened to the other types of literary flood will, I think, happen to this. Not of course that the novel in the sense of a story will ever die out among men, as long as men are men. You may be certain it will continue. But that this confining of interest in literature to a particular, and not high form, this absurd inhuman exaggeration of the novel, this false stature given to its authors, is nearing its term, I take as a matter of judgment to be true.

RELIGION AND POPULAR FICTION

KATHLEEN NORRIS

AMERICA, where the arts are concerned, is still only a baby; a healthy and engaging, but very young baby. They all tell us so, these English and European painters, writers and musicians who come over here to lecture to us or who write about us on the other side. And perhaps, partially at least, they speak the truth. We measure less than two hundred years as a nation, to their eight and nine hundred, their one and two thousand. Controversially this puts us at a disadvantage, and they rush in upon us with their criticism and advice. Where is our Milton, they ask triumphantly, our Dante or Goethe or Shakespeare, where is our Michael Angelo, our da Vinci, our Wagner or our Beethoven? And where, we Catholics go on to ask ruefully, is our first Saint, our Francis or Teresa?

Historically, as a nation, we are not as old as England was when John signed the Great Charter, as France was under Charlemagne. And no class is made to feel this stinging sense of age inferiority more painfully than the writers, who mutter desperately the names of Emerson, Mark

Twain and Edgar Allen Poe, well aware that if the standard is to be brought as low as at least two of these names imply, the case for American letters has not been materially strengthened.

But these lecturers, critics and commentators have only a verbal advantage, after all. The hoarded literature of all the ages is ours as much as theirs, and in many cases our appreciation of their great names is keener than their own.

Still, it is truly hard to imagine an American small town, or a chain of small towns, producing, in a few generations, a score, two score, of masters like Angelico, Ghirlandaio, Baroccio, Bellini, Tiepolo, and all the other inspired peasants who put upon cheap canvas the immortal babies, the eternally glorious Madonnas before whom we still stand stricken to silence. It is not easy to fancy some mid-western town, Red Bluff, for example, giving to the world another Shelley, Keats, Milton, Chaucer or Browning, or even a Fielding, a Dickens or a Thackeray. A Saint—a real live Saint from Tucson, Arizona, or Medford, Oregon—how odd it sounds! We all agree it is not a probability.

So we let the Europeans go on telling us that we have not the secrets of these things yet. And we don't ask them if our more practical achievements, our milk stations and clinics and schools, our health boards and wage laws and libraries and sanitation are not artistic miracles too, in

their modern way, and quite as amazing from the European standpoint as anything we are apt to find across the water.

Meanwhile, it is the secret hope of every American writer, and of every individual in the horde of beginners who do not yet quite merit the rank, and of every high-school girl whose essay takes the prize, and every seventeen-year-old boy who gets his first job on a newspaper—that he is someday to write the great national novel.

Ask an Englishman what he considers the greatest English novel, and he has twenty classics from which to choose. He knows, as he states his choice, that you and I have read this novel; “*Romola*” or “*Vanity Fair*,” “*The Tale of Two Cities*” or “*Tom Jones*,” and that back of him stands the approving judgment of millions and millions of story readers.

But when we Americans are asked what we consider the great, or one of the great, American novels, what can we say?

“*Tom Sawyer*” is not a novel. “*The Virginian*” and “*Peter Stirling*” had their day, to be sure, but so did volumes like “*The Dolly Dialogues*” and “*The Prisoner of Zenda*.” All these surely are not great? “*Little Lord Fauntleroy*,” which holds its own beside “*Alice*,” was written by an Englishwoman in America, and our American Henry James was educated in Eu-

rope and preferred to live there, and be identified with England; saying, or at least quoted as saying, that his work and his natural sympathies were more at home there than in his native New England.

Even if we call him American, does his work live? Is the new generation reading Henry James, as our generation read Ruskin and Pater and Morris, Newman and Greene and Stevenson, Barrie and Shaw and Phillips? I do not think so. Philosophers do still read Emerson, nature lovers still carry slim volumes of Thoreau, poets will always keep the name of Emily Dickinson alive. But here are three; who else?

Back of great writing must be great living. And we are not living greatly, in America, just yet. We lack the essential, simple, and yet supernatural law, in our literature, as we do in our daily lives. In the unlovely scramble of every crowded hour, in the feverish pursuit of amusement and stimulation, artificial beauty and artificial ideals, we have not built back of ourselves that fine and pure code that is really our Christian heritage, whether we know it (or care to admit it) or not. Religion, with us, is apt to be a hidden thing. It is not openly, triumphantly displayed, as the actuating force in our whole scheme; as the reason for purity and love in our homes, for dignity and spiritual courage before the world.

It was different in Dante's day, Goethe's day, Raphael's day. Shelley, Burns, Shakespeare might break the law, might escape from it, if they would. But that did not weaken the influence, or indeed make them less an actual part, of their respective times, of times saturated with the richness of hundreds of years of open and simple and universal and incessant evidences of Faith.

Even today, in comparatively non-Catholic England, they are much more courageous than ourselves. Newman, and the novels of Father Benson, Patmore, Chesterton, Belloc, may write what they will, and all England reads.

But Americans—do you who chance to read this know this fact?—Americans “do not like religion in stories.” Every time one puts Benediction or the mention of fish on Friday into a novel, there is a burst of protest. Once, years ago, when as a much younger writer I happened to put flowers on the altar on Holy Thursday, I received one hundred and fourteen letters of protest, most of them scornful, some of them angry. Also an editorial was written, headed scathingly “Calls Herself Catholic.” These things burned very deep at the time, as similar things have burned deep in the hearts of many other Catholic writers I know. As a matter of fact most of us now make our heroines preferably of any other faith but our own. Girls of other

persuasions may be allowed to be hot-tempered, ill-advised, indiscreet. But not Catholics.

"For goodness sake keep religion out of your books!" plead the letters, goodnaturedly, wearily, impatiently.

"That's good advice," an old writer said to me, years ago, when I was beginning. "Leave the Church out. They don't like it."

And until last year, when the temptation to write the story of an Irish family in America, and the absurdity of attempting that without giving the Church at least some of her rightful share in their lives, resulted in "Little Ships," I followed this advice. And anyone who cares to study the situation a little will see that almost all Catholic writers do so; that is, they "leave the Church out!"

Apparently the only form in which Catholic readers like Catholic characters in books is in the form of saints; the women all lofty and holy and supernaturally self-controlled, the men pious and noble, the atmosphere of Catholic homes little short of Heaven itself, and all the non-Catholic characters being impressed, softened, converted, and saved by the score. But this—more shame to us!—is neither true, nor interesting as fiction. The slow fight toward the saving of our souls is not picturesque and poetic, and our lives are darkened by mistakes and

weakness and stupidity in pretty much the same proportion as other men's and women's lives.

When the day comes when we can point to all the bad persons in the world, and say truthfully: "Those are not Catholics," and to all the good ones, and say "Those are," then Catholic fiction may be both truthful and palatable. Meanwhile, until that day, is it not possible that an attitude a little less sensitive might help to stabilize our literature, and give to future generations true pictures of us as we are, faulty, crowded, extravagant, pleasure-mad, hard-working, somewhat materialistic men and women, but—

But with what is petty and sordid and stupid in our scheme made just a little less animal because, whether we fail it daily, seventy times seven or not, we have back of us our Faith. It lives, in one form or another, in the greatest pictures, the greatest poems, the greatest books. "Adam Bede," "Resurrection," "En Route," "The Brothers Karamazoff," one can hardly imagine these books without the thread of pure gold to make them real.

And if we demand it, we may have this element, not mawkish and moralizing, not unnatural and idealized, but real, in the books of America. To praise it when it is found, to help young readers to find and enjoy books whose plots include the influence of religion, and to demand in bookstores books suitable for "a Cath-

olic child, man, woman" are three of the ways in which we may let the outside world know that we have missed this note from our national literature, and that we feel American letters weakened and made less stable and less effective by its omission.

If our Faith is the most important influence in our lives, it should have its place in our books. And conversely, if our books are to be true, they cannot live without it.

THE CATHOLIC NOVEL

RONALD KNOX

WITHOUT pleading guilty to optimism, you can put up a case nowadays for maintaining that there is a future for the Catholic novel.

I suppose that term could be accepted in one of three ways. It may mean a novel written by a Catholic—no more; it may mean a novel with a Catholic background, or it may mean a novel with a Catholic moral. Let us call those classes (1), (2), and (3), for the sake of convenience. Under (1) you can place, without fear of libel actions, much of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's work and most of Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes'. There is nothing reprehensible, after all, in a Catholic, however fervent, writing a book which leaves the world's debate precisely where it was. It would have been useful, no doubt, if Joel Chandler Harris had written Catholic propaganda, but it would be a tragedy if he had not given us "Uncle Remus." By all means, let us have novelists who happen to be Catholics.

By all means, again, let us have Catholics who happen to be novelists. (That means class No. 3 above.) There is no reason why a book should not have a Catholic moral, or any other kind of

moral, without ceasing to be literature. You cannot rule out Dickens and Charles Reade. I am not speaking here of the sacristy type of novel, which ends up:

"The priest laid his hand on the young man's shoulder. '*Tu autem Domine, miserere nobis,*' he said, bowing his head."

"'*Et cum spiritu tuo,*' answered Bernard, as he followed the old man into the presbytery."

That kind of thing is all very well, but we do not want our literary reputation to depend upon it. I am thinking of books which are literature, and yet have a moral—most of Msgr. Benson's work, some of John Ayscough's and Mrs. Wilfrid Ward's. A spiritual truth, like a moral truth, may be exhibited by means of a human story without losing its dignity. Such work, of course, will always be harshly criticized by reviewers, who will vow that their strictures are made in the name of art all the more feverishly because they know that their hatred of the book is religious. But such work will live and be valued for its own sake. A statue need not be the less beautiful because it supports a column.

The Catholic novel in sense No. 2 is, however, the type which I mean to discuss in this article. You cannot say that it was written primarily with a religious object; the indignant Colonel cannot throw it down with a snort of "Proselytism, sir, proselytism!" And yet you can see at

once that it was written by a Catholic, and could not have been written by anyone who was not a Catholic. Such a writer was Henry Harland; such a writer is Mr. Maurice Baring. Their works do not jostle Livius and Pohle-Preuss on every presbytery shelf; they are not recommended to the hesitating inquirer after Catholic beliefs. You are not likely to be converted by the hearsay attractions of Harland's Italian princesses; and if you were, you would think twice about Italian princesses after an hour of Mr. Baring. Yet Harland's whole background, and Mr. Baring's main background, cannot be mistaken for anything other than they are; Catholic beliefs, traditions, superstitions if you will, take rank as part of the complicated business which we call life, modify the outlook of the characters, affect the issue of the plot. The Catholic Faith does not peep out at you, as it does in the artless pages of "The Young Visitors"; it appears as an effective and a distinctive influence. *Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?* It is all true to life.

There is room, I say, for such novels, and room for more of them, even from less gifted authors. One department of modern literature which Catholics have hardly touched is the historical novel. Msgr. Benson wrote tendentious historical stuff, and others have followed in his footsteps. But even if propaganda be far from

his intentions, a Catholic has quite exceptional opportunities for writing a "live" book about any period of history before 1600. I do not mean that he will merely avoid falling into the pitfalls of false technicality; that he will refrain from writing about thurifers swinging solemnly from the ceiling, and bishops vested in the *Gloaca maxima*; do not even the Anglo's the same? He will have (what the Anglo has not) a working experience of what it is like to be a Catholic; will know, for example, how much of mitigated anti-clericalism, of impatience with foreign influences, can lurk in the bosom of a devout and loyal Catholic; he will not mistake Grosseteste for a forerunner of Cranmer, or Erasmus for a Protestant in disguise. He will know what workaday priests, monks, and nuns are really like. He will not be tempted, like some Protestant authors, to overburden his pages with religious sentimentalism. True, at the moment the historical novel is suffering something of an eclipse. We have lived through too much history, perhaps, to care greatly, at present, for what went before. But there is ground for suspecting that authors (and still more publishers) are underestimating the popular demand.

And even if you stick to the modern period; even if you confine your outlook to England; that home of the undenominational ("ninety-five religions," as the Frenchman said, "and only one sauce"), the Catholic atmosphere has its own

literary value so long as it is not overdone. The popularity enjoyed by some of Mr. Temple Thurston's work would prove that much. For one Protestant who can appreciate the inner glories of the King's Daughter there are twenty whose attention is caught by the varieties which clothe her round about. There is a mellow dignity about Catholic institutions, there is a full-bloodedness about Catholic Religious sentiment, which is constantly being exploited by the profane authors. Why should we never come into our own? Take the most inexplicable of all human decisions, the vocation to a Religious life. It is a fact of experience, as definite in its outlines, as final in its effect, as death or marriage—more so than modern marriage. It can be the ground of a tragedy, or the solution of an *impasse*. And yet how helpless is the treatment of it in Protestant novels when you put them side by side with Mr. Baring's "Passing By"! How can they be otherwise than at fault when they attempt the psychology of the supernatural?

And it seems to me that in the general modern uncertainty about first principles, in a world whose conscience is so doubtful about the moral theology of birth, death, and marriage, the Catholic writer has a positive advantage. His world, whatever be the inconsistencies of its practice, has a fixed moral code and objective moral sanctions. The severe morality of melodrama is not, of course, essential to the novel as such,

though it will probably always be essential to the best-seller. But *some* moral code fiction must assume; for the province of fiction (*pace* the moderns) is human action, defined as good or bad, right or wrong. The literature of hereditary taints and psychological neuroses is not fiction; it is only an exquisite kind of *belles lettres*. The play of "Hamlet" has no meaning unless you assume that a man may have moral scruples as to whether suicide is allowable. But the hero of modern Chelsea will always have a verdict of temporary insanity passed over his corpse, because the hero of modern Chelsea is always temporarily, if not permanently, insane. That is why the authors who, on their own admissions, are the best writers of today, are not read. We fall back on detective stories, confident that here at least we shall be confronted with human motives.

The Catholic author can, without doing violence to improbabilities, make his hero move in a society which, without being clerical, has standards of right and wrong; which is capable of reprobating and of condoning misconduct, instead of wringing its hands helplessly over complexes. That is his strength: he has a fulcrum against which the lever of temperament can act. And, whatever be the fate of our remarkable generation, it will always be human motive or nothing which invests our fiction with human interest.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE NOVEL

RENÉ BAZIN

de l'Académie française

DURING the past year the novel was the subject of numerous articles in French newspapers and reviews, and I see no indication that the controversy is drawing to a close. The extensive circulation of novels which, in a great part, deserve neither publication nor attention, furnishes the adversaries of the novel with ample and abundant weapons to be used against it. Who are they who attack the novel? Literary critics chiefly, worthy persons but not signally endowed with the gifts of a lively imagination and of the ability to spin a yarn, nor with the power to interest and move their readers, those qualities which are essential for the novelist. They have other gifts, no doubt, but are not satisfied with these; they range outside their own sphere. They are even more difficult to please than am I myself who have, occasionally, read even their writings with pleasure. What is the objection of these writers to the novel? Generally this: they cannot reduce the novel to any

specific category of writing, since it cannot be considered a learned study of manners, nor can it aspire to the dignity of history; should it become poetical or lyrical, it forthwith loses its essential characteristics, as well as its constant readers.

In every duel with swords—and the pen is one such weapon—it often happens that the thrusts strike above or below the point aimed at. Such, precisely, is what has occurred in the present literary discussion. As was to be expected, some critics pleaded, in the name of art, for complete freedom for the novelist who, they claimed, should not be subjected to moral restraint in the novel. Other critics were pleased to accord the novelist only a certain limited latitude. This is an important question.

Permit me to express my opinion on these two points. First of all, it is a sheer waste of time to attempt to debate the origin, the claims, the literary standing of a genre of writing that is so very old. Whence comes the novel if not from man's craving to hear of his fellowmen and of himself, and to hear of them in a pleasant way. The poems of India are in themselves great novels, full of adventures, of gods and men, replete with innumerable details that bring home to us something of the very ancient civilization of those distant peoples. What is the *Odyssey* but a novel—brought to perfection by

a professional story teller— of the crafty Ulysses and his companions; of the matron Penelope and her rejected suitors; of Nausicaa, the maiden without whom the story would lack the note of pristine freshness. Is it not the same with our own French *Chansons de Geste*, in which are recorded not only the battles of the palladins but also life as it was passed in the castles and towns, the pilgrimages, the feelings and sentiments of people in every strata of society? Is it not true that some of these poems are technically known as novels (*Roman*), for example, *Roman de la Rose*, *Roman du Renard*?

The novelist of today is the direct successor to the *trouvères* of the past ages, the descendant of those medieval story tellers who, in all countries where most people were unable to read, used to assemble the passers-by and arrest their attention with "I shall now tell you the story of the bad man and the good woman. . ." If this be so, then the very origin of the novel not only permits but even demands by a thousand instances that the novelist of the twentieth century be varied, profound, philosophical, well-informed, sprightly, amusing, poetic—and all at the same time— if he can. No other literary genre can boast of ancestry more ancient than the novel, or more celebrated or more numerous. The mother who first invented a story to

keep her child from crying was already a novelist, though she may not have been aware of it.

The second question is of another nature and it is easy to perceive how feeling may enter the discussion. Art, some contend—and they have already begun to show it in their books—is totally distinct from morals. Novelists, therefore, must be perfectly free to treat of any and every subject, and the manner in which they treat it should not be subject to any but the laws of esthetic beauty. In every European country, and I presume in America also, one meets with writers who hold this view or who are quite ready to hold it. These persons remind me of the story of the two French knights, who in the time of the crusades were on their way to Palestine. They presented themselves to the Pope and asked him, in compensation for the great sacrifices they were prepared to make for the Faith, to dispense them from whatever two of God's Commandments they should select. We can guess which would have been the two of their choice. But the Pope was not of their mind; furthermore, he made them see that in such matters he had no power to grant a dispensation.

So it is with the novel. The excessive liberties which certain novelists of all times and countries have taken and the theories advanced by various leaders of literary schools have not prevented their writings from being subjected,

as must every human action, to the norm of God's moral law. This is all the more necessary inasmuch as they set up a guide post to action. Besides, one can perceive the absurdity of pretending to claim exemption for such works from moral restraint since they depict certain "cross sections of life," that is they narrate a series of actions and events which are all governed by and should be judged according to unchanging rules of good and evil. I feel that Nietzsche's invention of the superman who is not bound by common duties, has not been without its influence in developing such literary doctrines of complete license. How convenient to be a superman; it is so easy—and at the same time so stupid—to believe oneself such!

By its nature, the novel is a literary type that is intended for men and women who are no longer just on the threshold of life. It portrays reality, and that is the admixture of good and evil. Even the most upright novelist enjoys the greatest liberty in this matter. He is permitted to introduce into the action almost every passion and to describe nearly every aspect of the realism of the world in which we live. One rule alone binds him, and that in conscience. While he may portray evil, he should not make it attractive. He may set forth error, provided, however, he gives some indication, forcefully or delicately as he may see fit, by which his readers

may realize that he is merely expressing an idea, which is, however, branded as false.

A dangerous art is that of the novelist, one which contains in potency almost limitless power. No matter what care an author lavishes upon his work, this always remains true: there will never be a great novel that can be read with the same feeling by all, and the choice of a book will ever remain a problem for the individual.

Novel writing is a mysterious art which no one should attempt who is not a born observer and a natural story-teller. The inspiration for a work nearly always presents itself to the mind at an unexpected moment; it comes from an emotion, a chance word, a trifle seen or heard, from something that awakens a response within and forces us to exclaim "What a fine subject for a novel! What possibilities for infinite vistas it offers! How many hearts it will touch! How many far off spirits, unknown to me, yet brothers, will be interested in the destinies of those beings whom I can create and make to grow, and to love, to suffer, to speak, whom I can unfold to my readers!" In a flash, one, two, three persons, the principal characters in the drama, rise up before the imagination of the artist. See how they have already assumed their own distinct features and their own peculiar characteristics! How closely this one resembles a traveler whom I chanced upon in this or that city,

this one is just like my country neighbor, that one is the very picture of a friend whom I lost! Here is a woman with a personality that is almost completely defined: she comes from the middle classes but she possesses a heart that is courageous, and tender, and discerning. Is not she the one who said to me one day "I do not begrudge gay life. I know it is made for some." Yes, it is she. I recognize her. After her marriage she spoke to me again and said: "Wherever I see a happy home there is always an unselfish woman in it." These are the characters that stand ready to take their part in the story.

Nothing more is needed than to give a definite shape, to impart full life to what are but yet vague and shadowy figures. The author must permit these children of his memory and imagination to grow. Without consciously working upon it, the subject that has attracted him, little by little, takes shape in the artist's mind. A possibility lies there, it is evoked by a gesture, by a detail of dress, by a word, by the beauty of a morning or an evening scene. A sudden inspiration, a small joy is aroused; we exclaim: "That is precisely what Genevieve will say, and this is what Dorothea will answer. . . . Yes, those eyes admirably express the sorrow I wish to describe. . . . This house under the elms, this room which someone thought to build for himself—but no, he built it for me, for here will I

have Genevieve's parents live, and nearby is the white boat which will bear away their eldest son, a sailor, an adventurer, born into the family of sedentary life, he who will give expression to the dream, for a long time repressed, perhaps through many generations and now all at once set free. . . ."

Thus, unnoticed, in the midst of countless other occupations, amidst various duties, during walks, visits, conversations, doubtless even in sleep, a story develops, takes on color, acquires a growing power over the spirit until such time as the author decides: "This must have life!" Then he seizes his pen, he opens his pad of paper, he writes, he pauses, he meditates, he corrects, he commences all over again, he smiles sometimes without exactly knowing why, he suffers too with his characters whose sorrow he records. I recall a time in my youth when, at the close of a visit to a famous novelist who honored me with his friendship, he suddenly interrupted our conversation and gazing at me as one looks upon a child before giving him some important advice, said with affection and seriousness: "Young man, you have just offered me your first novel; you will write others for there is no doubt as to your calling; but take my advice: Never kill anyone!" I have never killed anyone, but I have, at times, been obliged to let

some of my characters die, for I have observed that in real life such an end is not infrequent.

Innumerable hours I have spent wandering about the world, becoming acquainted with the various countries in which the children of my dreams have lived. I have passed many restless hours of anxiety at my desk, and some few exultant and joyous ones, as when a word long sought for or a picture clear and definite had come to my mind. I have been able to offer advice here and there under the name or the guise of some friendly character; I do not regret this, if I have moved some heart, if I have opened it to greater charity, to further and more courage to live, if I have shown disillusioned and distracted spirits that, in the midst of great and resounding evil, goodness has its own silent and winning place, and that it redeems the world. This is the nobility which, after Christ, is most frequently found in people of a humble station in life and which, to discerning eyes, so transfigures and ennobles them.

NATURE AND GRACE IN THE NOVEL

MONTGOMERY CARMICHAEL

THE Catholic Church surpasses in sheer simple interest, everything else in the world. The mere thought of such an institution with its exclusive claims, its intransigence in faith and morals, its one universal Head of countless millions, dazzles and enthralls. Its infallible voice, its organization at once simple and complex, the Divine Presence living within its Holy of Holies for adoration and communion, its public preaching in church and market-place, its incomparable spiritual direction in the secrecy of a sacred tribunal, the inexhaustible treasury of its spiritual writings, its missionaries, its religious orders, its saints, its mystics, these are but features of a vast whole, palpitating with living interest.

With this exceptional source of inspiration, with views of life ever insisting on the supernatural, with a body of doctrine that has made history, and a history of essential nobleness, it should follow that a work of fiction has but to be Catholic in its subject to be of surpassing interest. But is this the case? Too often not, I fear

—at least there are critics enough who say so. But the failure is not due to the subject, and it existed in the past rather than in the present. In days which are fast becoming remote, there seems to have been an almost complete absence of the gift of treatment in the writers of Catholic fiction, and that, where the life of Grace is concerned, is fatal. Religion there was in plenty in the books of those days: analyzed, there was nothing much the matter with it, but in the untreated lump it failed to attract, or more precisely it utterly repelled.

In the present day we happily enjoy a marked change for the better. In the hands of Mrs. Ward, Mr. Belloc, Mr. Chesterton, Benson, John Ayscough, Canon Sheehan, Katherine Tynan, M. E. Francis and lesser lights who all have *gift*, Catholic fiction has become a considerable force for good. The Catholic novelist, alone among his fellows, is concerned with the *unum necessarium*; he stands for decency in a degraded age. It is a happiness to take up a story with the certainty that there will be no modern offence in it. The contemporary Catholic writer of stories has style, has treatment, and concentrates on the essentials of religion. The result is that he is always interesting, and not seldom uplifting.

But I seem to notice in him, at times, a certain want of boldness, a shrinking from laying bare

the intimately sacred aspects of the struggle of a Catholic soul to attain the highest Catholic ideal. I well know the feeling. In the three Catholic stories I have written, "John William Walshe," "The Solitaries of the Sambuca," and "Christopher and Cressida," I was obliged to invent a character to tell the stories, so that I might not have to speak of very sacred things directly in my own name. In "Walshe" this device, perhaps, succeeded to some extent—a son tells the story of his father's life; that is natural; but in "The Solitaries" and "Christopher" the leading character tells the story of his own life; his virtues have to be brought out; he has to speak of them, to indicate them, himself. This needs art beyond the mere outline sketcher's, and the books suffer in consequence. But they would never have been written if I had to preach and exhort, to reprove and denounce, in my own name.

It seems to me that Catholic critics are too exacting towards writers of Catholic novels. Too much must not be expected from professedly Catholic fiction. The loftiness of the Catholic ideal, the great difficulties in dealing with it, should not be forgotten by the critic. The medium of fiction is useful and helpful up to a certain point, but it breaks down when we reach a rarefied atmosphere. I believe that in fiction in which religion is to play a high part and some-

thing like sanctity is to appear, genius alone should attempt painting, while the merely gifted will get better results with the simplest outline sketching. The unpretentious modesty of the medium seems rather to magnify than to dwarf the greatness of the subject. It tends to make false coloring impossible and saves from caricature, and it emphasizes the finite in the presence of the infinite.

But the critics cry out for something that shall be both great and Catholic, that shall be both a story and a living realization of the doctrine of St. John of the Cross. Their canon of criticism seems to me erroneous. They are asking the impossible. For a vivid and true picture, set in human surroundings, of the highest forms of the life of Grace, has so far evidently proved to be beyond the powers even of genius. In what book is there a single instance of such a picture on a great scale? It is Nature alone that can claim the triumphs of great fiction in the admirable pictures of such artists as Fielding and Sterne, Dickens and Thackeray, Miss Austen and Charlotte Brontë, Trollope and Hawthorne. In these stirring pages we find Nature in her coat of many colors depicted by true master-hands. Here she is alluringly arrayed in the virtues which are called after her; but here also is she intensely alive in all her deceit and cunning, her hatred of subjection, her loath-

ing of contempt, her greed of lucre and her covetousness, her love of bodily ease and creature comforts, of curious and beautiful things. Here she is in her inordinate vanity and all her flaunting exteriorities; here she may be seen to perfection in her delight in many friends; in her pride of place and birth, smiling on the successful, flattering the rich, cajoling all her victims; here, too, in all those other qualities and defects of hers so wonderfully outlined by the famous author of the "Imitation." But of Divine Grace, with its supernatural powers over the natural, there is not, in all their fascinating pages, so much as a vestige, and I doubt if a single one of these great geniuses could have told us what Grace really is.

The sure hand with which Nature's darling painters depict in wholly unembarrassed fashion, their vivid and natural pictures, is in large measure due to their ignorance of the mystic power which can transform nature and deify man. For it must be admitted that the life of Grace, as a subject, is an undoubted handicap to the writer of fiction, be his intentions as Catholic as may be. Even the great writer of the greatest of all stories, Cervantes in "Don Quixote," though he was often sublime, hardly touches on the strife between Nature and Grace. The truth is that fiction is a faulty medium in which to convey those profound things of the

spirit which most nearly concern a Catholic. The medium would break in the hands of even a Catholic genius who should assay the highest.

All this need not greatly concern us. A novel could never have the same influence in the great question of life as a book of purely spiritual writing. If a Catholic genius in fiction were to appear the equal in genius of the author of the "Imitation," if he had the same inimitable gifts of style and treatment as that great literary artist, the same power of piercing into the division of soul and spirit and of discerning the thoughts and intents of the human heart, if, in fine, the story he were to produce should prove to be the profoundest and most thrilling picture of life ever written, he could not hope to have a tithe of the influence over the souls of men which the famous treatise written by a monk for monks enjoys.

I read in the pages of a literary review some months ago the expression of a hope that *the* great English Catholic mystical novel might some day be realized and appear. God grant it! But no mere student of mysticism, even if a genius, could give us a true and superlative work of the kind. The author would himself have to be a Mystic, that is a man elevated from the state of ordinary Grace to the state of mystical Grace, in other words—a saint! Is such a one going to avail himself of the limited

medium of fiction to unfold what may be uttered of this high and holy state? I trow not. If he come out of his golden silence in an effort to use mere silvern speech, he will rather have recourse to the simple form of spiritual prose tractate in which all the best guides to the pilgrimage of life are written.

It is better, then, to renounce all hope that the novel of Grace can ever attain the art of the novel of Nature, remembering that there is a literature infinitely greater than fiction at its best, and alone capable of satisfying the deepest needs and longings of the soul. Nor should we forget that it is the Catholic's privilege alone to know how rightly to use these sealed fountains of refreshment to the soul's eternal health and present invigoration. He receives over and above what he reads, and he alone can say with truth of the interior life: *Dominus illuminatio mea.*

THE SUPERNATURAL IN FICTION

ENID DINNIS

THE recurring question, "Did the things which you describe in your stories really happen?" so constantly encountered by a writer whose stories contain a supernatural element, and the implied challenge, "If not, what right have you to invent them?" make the opportunity for discussing the point particularly welcome to the impenitent author whose supernatural stories are—pure inventions.

In the first place, both the query and the challenge beg the question, "What constitutes a true story?" To make answer that the truest story is that which is "pure invention" would sound like a labored imitation of a great truth-teller. One would prefer to begin at the beginning and leave the paradox to the summing up.

Why, we ask, do men and women take to writing? Is it not in order to give vent to a faculty for describing the thing seen, to a craving for passing on an impression? The thing seen may be an event witnessed, then the writer becomes a journalist, a reporter. It may be an abstraction, like "*Vanitas vanitatum! Omnia vanitas!*"

HAZARETH COLLEGE
LIBRARY

or "*Quidquid aeternum non est, nihil est*" in which case the fiction writer may take it in hand and pass it on, in the form of a story. One might put it thus: that where the journalist deals with the fact the novelist deals with truth, imaginative writer though he be, for the imagination of the fiction writer enters upon its task under stringent conditions which make of it, in a sense, a true story.

In story writing, unless the story be a fantastic one, the materially impossible is ruled out. The psychologically impossible is likewise taboo. Events must be within the bounds of experience and characters must act consistently in given circumstances. Thus governed, the rightly-told story possesses an underlying element of truth. In other words, it is the thing which could happen, not the thing which did happen, which makes a story a true story.

But opinion is divided as to things which can happen. Only of recent years has it been permissible to introduce what we now call "psychic phenomena" into a story without explaining the ghost away for the benefit of the self-respecting reader. Needless to say the canons of non-Catholic literary art still continue to look askance at incidents tinged with the miraculous, those dealing with the intervention of Providence—the form which the supernatural element usually takes in Catholic stories. This

brings us back to the question of the legitimate place of the supernatural element in Catholic fiction. The Catholic canons of literary art are still chary of the miraculous happening in a story of everyday life. Yet we all know, as Catholics, that miracles do happen in our own day. The miraculous is a factor in the lives of living people, as it was in the lives of the Saints, of people living in religious communities, or out in the world—hidden, holy souls moving in society or occupying bed-sitters. The King's Secret is respected, and we do not read of these things as we do of the events in the lives of dead-and-gone Saints. Sometimes they find their way into print, these extraordinary happenings, "super-normal" they are called in the parlance of the day, with the names of the persons and places duly disguised. The narrator makes an affirmation of their truth, which, by the way, sometimes regarded as the final touch of artistry, defeats its own end.

Curiously enough, there are people who consider this form of supernatural story the only legitimate one. The author who, acting on the "true story" principle, takes his authentication from the lives of the Saints, or from the thing told in confidence of certain hidden holy folk, and draws their parallels in incidents of his own fashioning, is liable to be convicted of not playing the literary game, and this by persons by

whom the principle of divine intervention is admitted. Yet he is as clearly within his rights as the author who invents incidents connected with such human affairs as love, hatred, greed, or any other constituents of non-celestial adventures.

In the pre-humanist Middle Ages there appear to have been men who regarded all fiction as falsehood unless it contained a parable, in which case fantasy might become a higher form of truth. Nowadays, nobody calls the story of a marriage in Mayfair a falsehood, because we know that marriages are made in Mayfair. Yet a story on a spiritual par with the story of, say, the marriage of St. Catherine of Siena might be considered to require a footnote stating that the event actually happened to a person or persons known to the writer.

Yet one might venture to claim that the author who uses a supernatural incident of his own invention as a factor in telling his story is working on more legitimate lines than one who makes the incident itself the sole object of telling the story. It may claim to strengthen the reader's faith, but it more often simply provides a pious thrill for those who have a taste for "psychic" stories. The pious thrill, in isolation, might indeed be subject to criticism on the grounds both of truth and healthfulness. In the lives of the Saints divine manifestations

were invariably related to an end which made for edification. They lose their truth when taken out of their setting and made to stand alone, without a meaning or a moral beyond the "thrill," which is, in good sooth, light food for faith to feed upon.

Any supernatural element in fiction, one would dare suggest, should be admitted only as a factor in working out the main plot. A "supernormal" manifestation of the finger of God may be used, as it were, to dot the i's and cross the t's of the story of a spiritual adventure. It is there that it has its legitimate use.

So much for supernatural occurrences in the inventing of which the writer is up against the traditional restriction which allows no kind of fiction, profane or otherwise, to be as strange as truth. His incident must be but the shadow of the parallel one from which he gains his sanctions. But the supernatural element in Catholic story-writing is by no means dependent on "psychic manifestations." Once let the eye learn to look for happenings which bring one in touch with the infinite, and the contact with the unseen will express itself in a manner far more subtle than psychic emanations, for all that phantoms will be replaced by everyday things. The eye which sees by this inner light is possessed of a kind of double sight; and who shall

say that this is not a better gift than the gift of second sight?

The true spiritual romance is to be evolved out of such observation. And this is quite another thing from the novel with a purpose or the novel with a moral. The novel with a purpose, to justify its artistic existence, has to tell a good enough story for the purpose to be suffered ungladly for the story's sake. The novel with a moral must depend upon jam to disguise its powder, but the spiritual romance frankly centers its interest in the spirit. It is an artistic discovery, a happy hunting-ground for the faculty which craves to describe for others the highest adventure, the loftiest truth, the most enduring beauty.

The things of the spirit offer a lure for the artist no less than for the man. No one loving the ideal, reverencing the real, could fail to succumb to it. To feel the Hand of One in whom all things work together for good laid on one's shoulder, guiding one through the dark places, is to face cold facts as unblinkingly as the realist whose fiction is but distorted truth. To glimpse the workings of One who holds the might of evil in that same locked Hand, is to mount heavenward on a ladder of hard sayings, to climb upward on St. Augustine's stepping stones whilst others hurl them at an impervious Fate.

To introduce the supernatural not as an element but as the basis of a story is to provide the wherewithal which makes for a finish; a story demands an ending, but every mundane story ends on a seeking note. If the author should enlist the aid of a supernatural incident of the super-normal order to illuminate his point, if he find there a coincidence rather more neatly arranged than is usual with chance, if he tinges his atmosphere with something not normally inhaled by busy breathless mortals, he is still within his rights as an artist in thus making use of the material set at his disposal as a Christian to whom Christianity is still a supernatural creed.

The writer of fiction who takes the supernatural element as the basis of his story has struck an inexhaustible treasure. But the sesame to the treasure chamber is the slogan of the Saints, "*Quidquid aeternum non est, nihil est;*" and it is not easy to refrain from making a something of the things which are not eternal. He must, in short, be a specialist, a devotee.

Many a mundane artist has wedded a jealous lover. Art has been dedicated to Art. It may be that, in the case of the writer of fiction who is a real realist, art must be dedicated to the Artist. Of Him the old English mystic said, "He is a jealous Lover and suffereth no fellowship."

THE CATHOLIC AND SUPERNATURAL NOVEL

EMILE BAUMANN

NOTHING seems easier to write than a wretched novel. Truth to tell, of all literary forms, the most difficult to do well is the novel. No other form requires the interplay of such complex elements nor such continued creative power. A novel, perfect as "Oedipus Rex" is perfect in the drama form, is a miracle not yet achieved. A brief, analytical novel, an idyll, a fantastical narrative may almost seem to be without blemish or flaw. But when a vast subject-matter embraces and entwines characters and surroundings, making one great vital idea spring up out of a multiplicity of figures and out of a mass of happenings, then such an enterprise really amounts to this, that it aspires to introduce into the scheme of reality a symmetry of forces, to evoke an uncreated world. Such daring presumption must needs fall short of the ideal sought.

However, this ideal cannot be attained unless the artist begins his work with a comprehensive view of the universe as a whole, and is thus able,

of himself, to construct a harmonious union of forces.

Naturally the Catholic writer, because of his Faith, is more capable than any other of reaching a true synthesis of universal life. A naturalist, a pagan may note the analogies and similarities of phenomena in the physical world. But the Christian artist alone is in a position to bring forth from beyond the horizon the light which explains the movements of all living beings whether they be directed towards God or towards Satan.

The exaltation of terrestrial things, considered from such a viewpoint, is beyond expression. The soul of the least of men reflects in its mysterious depths the splendors of the three Divine Persons. The joining of the ways over the bridge connecting one eternity with the other holds interest for Heaven, for the earth and for the damned. About the soul, angels and demons wage a ceaseless warfare that will continue till the end of time. Its actions and its thoughts have tremendous reactions, they may save a multitude of living beings or they may cause their loss, they may hasten the deliverance of the dead whose atonement drags with painful tardiness, increase the joy of Saints, and even the very glory of God. Infinity itself converges towards the puny spark of our life; and what

writer can adequately recognize such a fact except he be also a believer?

Such a theological and supernatural concept is realized most fully in an epic poem like the "Divine Comedy." Still, the mystical novels of the Middle Ages may furnish some sort of an idea of it; for example, "La Vita Nuova" of Dante, "Perceval the Gaul" (with the "Legend of the Holy Grail") and "Blanquerra" of Raymund Lull, that strange story of a youth who, searching for happiness, tries several states of life; marriage, the life of a monk, that of a prelate, and finally that of a hermit in the depths of a forest; in the contemplative life he gains complete happiness.

Yet, even at that time, the tales of chivalry were concerning themselves with the one topic that was all-sufficient for pagan novels, namely, love adventures revolving more or less around the commonplace question: will so and so be in love with so and so? In spite of the many nuances and the varied concepts of love, it may be safely asserted that fiction has for centuries lived from just that one subject and that it is dying of it now. Tales of warlike and chivalrous adventure might well have injected some virility into it. But even these became effeminate because of love-making episodes.

Yet it is imperative to establish a profound difference between purely imaginative inven-

tions, such as the "Amadis" or the "Astrée" and a novel like "The Princess of Cleves," where passions are truthfully depicted in the light of Christian principles.

Voltaire in "Zadig" and "Candide," and Rousseau in his "New Heloise," (Goethe did nothing but imitate), prepared the renewal of this class of works by substituting the novel of thought for the novel of adventures. The former merely expounds a negative and brutal philosophy while the latter sets up as principal element a most dangerous spirit of sentimental derangement.

To Chateaubriand belongs the credit of having restored Christian principles to the novel. A beautiful idea of sacrifice prevails in "Atala" and "The Martyrs." It was a pity such a man did not know how to live up to his Faith. Drily Voltairian in his judgments of men and things, devoid of solid theology, he propounded a Christianity more academic than personal. He preferred to bedew his literary works with the lustral water of Christian principles, rather than suffuse them by the vivifying sap of divine inspiration.

The brilliance of "The Martyrs" is cold, it is as artificial as a stage effect. In spite of the final scene, whose splendor remains impressed upon our memory, a pagan sentiment pervades the whole of this composite work.

It is not enough merely to have a Christian imagination; all the soul's faculties should be entirely immersed in the supernatural. A work of fiction is the imparting of vital elements which the artist has assimilated. The very atmosphere of modern life is permeated with contagion, so that if the heart and intelligence of the writer be not fully saturated with Christian energy, his novels will resemble the children of a doubtful father whose very appearance proclaims the half-breed born of eclectic adultery.

These palpable defects are apparent in all novels of the Romantic school; even in those of Balzac himself who, with his clearcut ideas and strong artistic sense, might have given us a work as great as Dante's or as Shakespeare's. Balzac was, as a matter of fact, unable to free his Catholicism from a certain naturalistic philosophy drawn from Diderot, and from a hazy mysticism borrowed from Swedenborg. After the manner of the pantheists he saw the ever-present identical principle of eternal life stir in nature "one and solid." For him, what are called the attractions and the repulsions of things, translated into thought, became either love or aversion. What will power is to human beings becomes in plants their fragrance or their life-giving sap; matter and thought are for Balzac two modes of the selfsame power. Nevertheless, his characters move in a Christian at-

mosphere and would be unintelligible to a society educated outside the pale of the Church. The characters who follow their own instincts are shown as doomed to destruction; to the savage selfishness of passion (as in "Eugénie Grandet"), the novelist contrasts the loftiness of those souls who obey the laws of mystical immolation.

Two distinct currents of thought were necessarily to find their source in the work of Balzac; one entirely naturalistic, as expressed in the works Flaubert, Zola, Daudet and the Goncourt brothers; the other supernatural and Catholic, of which Barbey d'Aurevilly was the precursor. This author has ably defined his conception in the preface of "Une veille maitresse." He says that: "He has described passion such as it is and such as he saw it. But while describing it he has also expressed disapproval, condemning it in every page of his book. . . . What is truly magnificent in Catholicism, morally and intellectually considered, is that it is broad and wide, profound, comprehensive, immense, that it embraces human nature as a whole and in its entirety. . . . It admits of passions and of their description, because it is fully aware of the possibility of drawing profitable teachings from them, even when the artist does not do so."

And elsewhere, in the preface to "L'Ensevelée" he says: "The author has taken advantage,

in his work, of the grand sweep of Catholicism, which never hesitates to deal with human passions, while it takes care to show the horror of their evil consequences."

Barbey d'Aurevilly felt obliged to state these principles, because in his novels he dared to describe carnal passions in all their unbridled violence. "Les Diaboliques" attempts to make clear this truth: at the bottom of all impure desires is hidden a satanic instigation. Free-thinkers and pagans merely ascribe them to natural attractions or tendencies. But the fact is that whenever man transcends human possibilities in the fury of his cravings and in the criminal deeds to which they impel him, it is certain the forces of evil have conspired for his downfall, adding their own malignity to his corruption. One of the most gripping stories in "Les Diaboliques" is entitled: "Happiness in Crime." It is the tale of a man who marries his mistress, after having with her assistance poisoned his legitimate wife. The two criminals love each other; they are apparently happy; at least they believe in their happiness; but nothing could be more terrifying than this illusion; Divine grace has forsaken them; they have unreservedly yielded themselves to evil to the very limit and without hoping for redemption.

Barbey d'Aurevilly wanted to create a counterpart for "Les Diaboliques" in "Les Celestes,"

but he was not able to write the second set of stories. The history of guilty passions is easier to write than that of pure and chaste affections; nevertheless, the divinely supernatural surely should offer to art sublime ideas equally as vast as those of the preternaturally diabolic.

Leon Bloy and Huysmans have fallen into the same error; and their works of fiction are not imaginative tales freely elaborated, but personal events in the lives of both writers, interpreted according to what Bloy called the "literary arrangement."

Many are the methods and degrees in which Catholic dogma and Catholic ethics may be made to enter into a novel. For instance, see the case of a Christian positivist, Paul Bourget. In planning "*Le Démon du Midi*" he began by asking himself whether earnest beliefs could exist simultaneously by the side of the very worst monstrosities of passion. If one acts differently than one thinks, does one not end by thinking as one acts? This abstract question became for him a dramatic sequel of events which unraveled themselves in perfect accordance with Christian principles, for the simple reason that experience cannot but show the truth of these. However, though Satan may have set his claws on the book's title, one does not feel his presence; the supernatural element exists in the work as a concept; it does not live in the heart of the deeds.

In similar fashion a young novelist, François Maurice, told me once: "I am not a Catholic novelist; I am a Catholic who writes novels."

It is possible, on the other hand, to suppose a novel impregnated to the very marrow of its bones with supernaturalism, in which everything should be seen and felt under the light of this double truth: the fall and the redemption of man.

The first duty of a Catholic writer of fiction lies in representing life as it is, that is to say, in the way his observations dictate and his Faith reveals it to him. The delicate point in this task is to perceive the limits within which descriptions of sin must be held. Among the passions inherent to the Fall, those which generally leave the most tragic results come from the sins of the flesh. Art, therefore, can neither suppress them altogether nor disguise their wretchedness, without being unfaithful to the reality of things. It must not be inferred from the above that the artist is therefore bound to express everything. He should discard all those characters which prove to be wantonly lewd or repulsively loathsome. He must follow the proprieties as they refer to his readers, to the society and the epoch he is depicting. The golden rule for every writer is to refrain from describing anything which might leave in the souls of his readers a lasting

impression of the attractiveness of sin; rather, he must present sin as sin and shame as shame.

But he should not limit himself to touching upon the morality of the consequences. The world that we see plunges its roots into the depths of a world that we cannot see. Our responsibilities come from a higher level than that which we occupy; they extend beyond the immediate sphere of our actions. On the other hand, the mystery of divine grace implies this necessity for certain laws: good is derived from evil in a greater proportion than evil oppresses virtue. The harmony existing between the visible and the invisible worlds is unfathomable and infinite.

To the art of the novelist belongs the perception of both, and the construction of a vision in which he does not try to prove or to disprove anything. From the dramatic sequel of events, whether taken as a whole or as isolated incidents, the symbol rises to the surface. Under the cloak of human happenings the supernatural element is ever active, either as a lifegiving sap or as a destructive poison according to whether its nature be divine or diabolic. In order to view the present life, the novelist of the supernatural must place himself upon the axis of eternity; thereby his concepts gain a sort of prophetic dignity. He well knows that all creatures groan in expectation of the day when "the children of

God will be revealed." While he observes, under the lamp of the Sacred Books, the men of his own times, as well as those of the past and the future, and himself, he sketches as it were a preface to that dreadful book which will be opened in the hour of the Last Judgment. The possibilities of the novelist's work are immense; alas, the power of execution is limited.

THE TREND OF THE NOVEL

COMPTON MACKENZIE

THE novel is a mongrel of literature. That may be the reason why no critic has succeeded in establishing canons by which it may be judged, and why it flourishes most conspicuously with mongrel nationalities like the English, the American, and the French, though in putting forward such a theory I do not forget that "War and Peace" which many, myself included, would call the greatest novel ever written, was Russian. This mixture of bloods leads critics to ascribe to the novel diverse origins and readers to demand from it diverse objects.

In Plato's "Symposium," Diotima, the Wise Woman of Matinea, suggests to Socrates that all arts are a kind of poetry, even though the name poetry be only accorded to the work of those who specialize in what is concerned with music and meters. Poetry, she declares, is that which passes from not being into being. Now, if the poetry of 400 B.C. was perceived to be more than one thing, what a much more extensively complicated and more numerous faceted thing the poetry of A.D. 1926 would have seemed to Diotima and Socrates? Today, music, which

for so many centuries was subordinate to the chanted word or movement of the dance, occupies a position sufficiently mighty and independent to warrant a contention that the future of great art is in its keeping.

Contemporary verse, contemporary sculpture, and contemporary painting bear all the marks of a fatigue that is due partly to the oppressive awareness of an already achieved perfection within the limitations of mortality, partly to the discouragement of attempting to fix in a permanent design the rapidly shifting kaleidoscope of a life that denies to the artist the tranquility Wordsworth required for the recollection of emotion. I do not mean the loss of external tranquility due to the corruption of the human mind by machinery. One can still retreat from mere noise. It is the loss of intellectual tranquility from which the artist suffers.

A literature inspired by revolt will always have a passionate value, and provisionally often an esthetic value, but when the conditions that inspired revolt are no longer apparent, such a literature tends to become as personal as a dream or a love letter without any objective reality. I may claim in these pages without being involved in an argument, that only a Catholic can possess the intellectual tranquility necessary to the creative manifestations in art of the human soul. Yet no unprejudiced critic can affirm that the

security of Faith has produced much great painting or verse since the Renaissance, though it is remarkable and, I think, profoundly significant that all the greatest musicians have either been Catholics or inspired by the Catholic attitude toward existence. I would claim that for Bach and even Wagner. It is generally supposed that great art requires intellectual freedom as much as tranquility in which to flourish, and Mr. George Moore has devoted a great deal of his enchanting prose to arguing from that postulate the failure of Catholics to produce great paintings, or great verse, or even great prose. The answer is that the Saints are the artists of the Catholic Church. From the moment that God was Incarnate and ceased to be a Sublime Idea, the creativeness of man the artist was humbled before the supreme act of Self-Creation. May one be allowed to perceive in the triplicity of the arts an infinitely faint adumbration of the Holy Trinity? May one suggest that painting and sculpture, which it should be observed are always the earliest arts to develop, seek with human feebleness to express the Father; that poetry, whether in verse or prose, seeks to express the Son; and that music, always that latest development, seeks to express the Holy Spirit? I use the word "express" in the sense that anybody might speak of

expressing the sea with the poor echo of it heard in a dusty shell.

To return to Diotima. I venture to contend that the poetic impulse which she would recognize as most authentic today (unless, as is arguable, she would only recognize the true poetic impulse in what we loosely call science) would be the novel. Most of what verse did in the past music will be doing in the future, and what music cannot do (I regard the present tendency to divagate into the excessive representationalism as a blind alley) the novel, or, what one hopes it will become, imaginative prose, will have to do.

I am not prepared to maintain that the novel, at any rate in the form it possesses at present, is the highest expression of the poetic impulse in man; indeed I am ready to argue that it is definitely the lowest, and the fact that as novelists women, for the first time in the history of art, are genuinely competing with men seems to me a proof of this. I do not believe that any woman ever has been a supreme artist except in the lower forms of art and, unless some profound physiological change takes place in her, I do not believe that she ever will be a supreme artist. The same may be noticed in science. In biology, which is the novel of science, woman can hold her own. In mathematics, which is the music of science, she is nowhere.

The novel began, as the verse presumably began, with epic narrative. Epics in verse decline into fancy-dress diversions. Keats, who had as clear a critical eye as anybody, killed the epic in verse when he abandoned "Hyperion." Had he been born a century later it is dreadfully probable that he would never have written verse at all. If Shakespeare were writing now, I fancy he would be writing novels. Just as verse with the development of humanity broke up into various forms which broadly may be called epic, lyric, and dramatic, so by now the novel has a large number of potential aspects, which, more's the pity, writers on esthetics do not condescend to discuss. An Aristotle or a Goethe might have something valuable to say about what for good or for ill is the most spontaneous art form of our period. Lyric verse flickered for a moment on the battlefields of Flanders, but it was at best a dim phosphorescence of the agonized mind. Great verse died with Shelley. The drama blazes with a momentary and deceitful splendor, but the drama as we have known it since Aeschylus is slowly dying. Euripides killed the Attic drama. Ibsen killed the modern drama. Each in his own way was too good for it.

The trend of modern life is set strongly against any drama, familiar to us as such. It still prospers as a form of entertainment, partic-

ularly in America, where there is a much larger unsophisticated audience than anywhere in Europe; but with all its amazing competence it remains an essentially commercial undertaking, and the modern American drama seems to have no more serious claim to be considered a manifestation of the poetic impulse than the plays of Scribe or Sardou. A novel like "Babbitt" is to my mind worth the sum total of American plays produced during the last decade. If the cinema ever takes any part in drama it will be a destructive part. We are always being told that the cinema is in its infancy. That is obvious. We are invited to believe that it will grow up and provide us with a new form of art. That seems doubtful. Let us get back to the novel, which, mongrel though it be, has at any rate the vitality which is characteristic of mongrels.

The poetic faculty of the novelist can be exercised, broadly speaking, in two ways: by telling what he knows to be lies and by telling what he conceives to be the truth. Now, although superficially the latter would seem the worthier exercise of the faculty, it is clear that the narrator of noble lies may do much less harm than the exponent of base truths. I presume that few readers of this series would not hurriedly assent to the proposition that the novels of James Joyce have done more damage to morals than the novels of Sir Walter Scott. Superficially, this must

appear to Catholics such a self-evident proposition as scarcely to be worth stating, and yet, with all the gravity I can command I would ask them to pause and consider this mentally exasperated time of ours before they do assent to it.

But it is hardly fair to match Joyce's work against the novels of another epoch. Let me take a typical modern romance, which is credited with as much good as the harm of "Ulysses." Must I be considered wrong headed in believing that the contrary is the case? A book like "If Winter Comes" lulls people into false security. Its moral influence is ultimately as ineffective as an organ's. It makes the tired business man feel good, and in feeling good imagine that he has fulfilled his duty to God and his neighbor. Novels like "If Winter Comes" are paving stones of Hell. I make this assertion without the slightest desire to be offensive, and I should not dream of making it had "If Winter Comes" been accepted everywhere as nothing but an excellent fairy-tale. It is because I have constantly seen it held up as an example to the wicked "realists" of what real life is that I must protest against it as a relaxing book, which for me is the same thing as an immoral book, though let me make it clear that I regard entertainment as one of the justifications for writing novels, and that while saluting "If Winter Comes" as

an entertainment I am condemning it as a sermon.

And the sad thing is that the author of this book thought that he was telling the truth about humanity. His moral purpose in evolving this romantic lie was unimpeachable. I should guess that he had never suffered from a momentary doubt that he was writing about real people and about life as it is lived; and thanks to his complete sincerity he was able to delight myriads with recognizable human beings, recognizable, however, not because they were human beings, but because they followed the strict conventions and prejudices of the average reader's mind.

Until the camera induced people to look more carefully at the action of horses in a race countless pictures were painted of horses galloping in an unnatural attitude. If a painter had represented them as they really were before the camera destroyed the old formula, his horses would not have been recognized as doing what they were supposed to be doing. Yet if it is impossible now to return to the old conventions, many of us feel that the photographic reproduction also errs, and it is dissatisfaction with the camera that is driving so many contemporary painters into approaching their art from an entirely fresh angle. But the apotheosis of the camera through the cinematograph is not merely affecting the drama and painting, it must obvi-

ously be affecting the novel equally. It seems to me clear that more and more readers will demand from the novel something that only the novel can give them. And if the novel fails to supply this, the novel will decline into a fancy-dress diversion and die.

In pessimistic moments I incline to the belief that all art will slowly die if the mechanical development of this planet continues at the present rate very much longer. Few will deny that imagination is turning more and more to science, farther and farther away from art all the time. However, perhaps, when this epoch of poetic science is exhausted our descendants will return to art, though I find it incredible that the art of such a future will use the same formulas and conventions as those with which we are still struggling. I feel that music may be the only form of genuine poetry that will survive. But let that pass. We are still struggling, and every Catholic novelist who pretends to offer more than mild and wholesome entertainment must have asked himself what is to be his own attitude in this struggle.

To be frank, I am ill equipped to write anything illuminating or even serviceable about the modern novel, because my reading in that direction is severely restricted. I cannot afford the time to be omnivorous of fiction, demanding as I do every moment I can secure to my own learn-

ing. So, when I do read a novel, it has usually been strongly recommended beforehand, and therefore my general impression of contemporary fiction is not of its banality but of its extreme cleverness. I am sometimes a little disturbed by that cleverness, and find myself wondering if the novel may not ultimately expire as a vital form of art from congestion of the brain. Fine clothes may make a fine doll, but they will not give it life. Anthony Trollope is a warning to this generation. He died and was buried and passed into what looked like the immediate oblivion deserved by any man who wrote two or three novels a year that simple folk could read with pleasure. And now here he is again as much alive as ever. The life he gave to his characters was not apparent while their author was alive himself, nor indeed until his own generation had passed away. Trollope's people were so like real, dull, ordinary people as to seem hardly worth the trouble of producing. It was not obvious that he was writing as it was obvious that Meredith was writing, or as it was obvious in our time that Conrad was writing, and it was generally felt that anybody who could stoop to such photography could do as well as that.

By the way, before the invention of photography what was the stigma that critics cast upon photographic writers? Aristophanes would certainly have called Euripedes a photographic

dramatist if there had been kodaks on the Areopagus in those days. I have often been assured by American "intellectuals" that "Main Street" and "Babbitt" are no more than clever photography. Yet I have no doubt that both these novels will be read one day to find out what America was like in this tumbledown time of ours. My own opinion is that no novel which does not reflect sanely and with some catholicity of mind its own age has any chance of life hereafter. Every age will have its own intimate novelists. The coprolites of the great saurians have an interest for geologists because even a coprolite from the vast unknown past is something; but the coprolites of contemporary cerebration will never be noticed by the trillions that swarm ahead of us in the abysm of futurity.

I do not recognize in Catholic novelists as a body the least tendency to grapple with life as a whole, and, despairing though the task may seem in this complicated age, one might expect something more than sectarian writing from the only writers who have the Truth. Perhaps the Protestant temperament is a happier one for the novelist to possess. Its very egocentricity is valuable, for the fashion of the times favors endogenous writing. And then one of the troubles of a Catholic writer is that he has less illusions about humanity than a Protestant or a rationalist. Credulous, he may be considered, about

the things of another world, but his most hostile critic cannot accuse him of any credulity about the things of this world. Everybody will remember the attitude taken up toward the late Pope over the War. His Holiness had no illusions about the combatant nations, and his utterances on the subject genuinely struck numbers of people as a kind of monstrous cynicism. This apparent cynicism permeates the Catholic mind. We Catholics may esteem it the blessing of clear sight, but that is not the way others regard it.

I lately saw a casual reference in some American review to my books as "bitter and disillusioned." That is the impression they had made on one reader. No doubt many others would agree with him and discount the religious consolation that I have tried to stress wherever my theme and characters would allow me. I used to be told by critics that I was hampered by redemptionist theories, and I am now accused by another school, of sentimentality, because, my use of religion in a novel strikes such a school as sentimentality.

On top of that, I have been accused widely of what people who make these accusations call "lubricity." I mention such criticisms to show from what different angles a writer may be attacked; but at the moment I am chiefly concerned over the "lubricity." How far is a Cath-

olic novelist entitled to represent the world as he sees it when he knows perfectly well that, whatever his sincerity, he is liable, owing to the unfortunate popularity of the medium, to hurt young people, and perhaps many older ones? I have been asking myself this question with increasing anxiety for the last eight years, because the time I allowed myself to recover my balance after and obtain a perspective of the War is drawing to a close, and I must presently pick up an attitude towards art which I deliberately dropped at the end of "Sylvia Scarlett." In other words I must once again write out of myself and not out of the margin of superfluous talent which may be called professional ability. It is evident to me that I shall be unable, if I preserve my courage, to avoid writing much that will shock and much that will hurt. And at forty-three one realizes better than at twenty-seven how much one *can* shock and hurt. Nevertheless at forty-three I cannot bring myself to believe that a Catholic novelist ought to turn away from truthfulness, even though by such truthfulness accidental harm may be done to the immature mind.

It is idle to pretend that any novel has a chance nowadays of really impressing its time unless it is ruthlessly honest. The world is too old for fairy tales, and it is so rapidly growing much older every day that Catholic novelists

ought to face the position. For eight years now as a writer I have played for safety, because apart from the three books I wrote in the hope of presenting an authentic picture of the English mind, compromising as usual, this time with Catholicism, I have written nothing that was not designed primarily to entertain, written as I have said not out of myself, but out of my professional ability. I am perfectly sure that no author has any right to shock or hurt unless he is writing a book that he *must* write in distinction to a book that he *can* write. But that period of safety writing is nearly at an end, and next year I shall be turning away from fairy tales to reality.

I have read through some of the earlier articles in this series a little sadly, because I find myself in almost total disagreement with most of the views expressed by my eminent colleagues. I cannot accept the proposition that the novel's only object is to offer mild and wholesome entertainment. I assert that a Catholic novelist's duty is to drag his trawl as fearlessly in the depths as to cast his fly upon the sparkling shallows. What would be thought of a man who made a false confession for fear of shocking the priest? I am not presuming to claim a sacramental quality for art, but I do claim that the artist who shirks the truth out of cowardice profanes himself. A woman once wrote to me

that "Sylvia Scarlett" had sent her back to her duties after ten years of abandonment. I set that soul against the adolescents my books are supposed to have corrupted and the tired business men they have undoubtedly bored. I see no moral value in a book that makes people *feel* good. A glass of whiskey will do as much for some temperaments. And of all other writers Catholic writers have the best right to destroy, even if they do make people feel bad by their destruction, because they can always point to the Ark of Salvation. They will not be making people feel bad without offering a remedy; they will not be destroying blindly.

In the Middle Ages a pilgrimage to Compostella was accepted as the equivalent of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Of this the tired business man was the first to take advantage. We Catholic novelists shall not effect much by supposing that we are fighting paynim in the secure ecclesiastical health-resort of Compostella. But I feel too deeply on this question to run the risk of appearing sophistical by further argument.

THE ART OF THE NOVEL

HENRY BORDEAUX

de l'Académie française

“TELL me a nursery tale,” said La Fontaine, “and I shall have pleasure exceeding great.” From the time that his mind first wakes to the realization of his surroundings, man has always sought to add to the visible world of reality an imaginary world of illusion, of mirage, a wonderful fairyland, which he creates from his own little head with the spontaneity of a great artist. With charming ease he turns a stick into a horse, from a stone he makes a house, and from a flower a forest. Do not cast doubts on his daydream; he will only laugh at your ignorance, and rightly.

In all ages, and at all times, men have need of hearing the story of human life, of its feelings, its passions, its customs, of all that links one generation to another. The Greeks were inspired by the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey.” The Middle Ages were aroused to enthusiasm by the *Chansons de gestes*, by the cycle of Charlemagne, by the adventures of the Knights of the Round Table. In the villages, late at night, the circle draws around an old shepherd who relates his

tales of romance and adventure. In the cities, people read novels. And why do they read novels? Is it for the pleasure of getting away from reality, or is it for the pleasure of entering into it, or is it for some other reason?

The novel of imagination—and there are many splendid ones, Stevenson's for example—takes the reader out of his habitual surroundings into a new world, far away and strange. The novel of manners, the analytical novel, on the contrary, leads him to a better understanding of the narrow circle in which his own life is held prisoner, and which familiarity or a lack of reflection has prevented him from comprehending or appreciating to its depths. René Boylesve has aptly defined the novel, in the preface to "*Madeleine jeune femme*," as "an invitation to reflect honestly upon life, profoundly if possible, even though it be in bitterness and trouble." Leon Daudet also explained the novelist's calling: "The artists have their own mission; it is not that of soldiers, nor of priests, nor of professors and judges, but it is not any less worthy and useful than theirs. Artists give to life, to all life, its intensity, its charm and its value. They do not make men brothers—an impossible thing—they make them merely relations in the realm of emotions, and this relationship is sharp, miraculous and without a limited purpose to increase 'indirectly' the sum total

of goodness and joy on the earth. They give breadth to the heavens and solidity to dreams."

In the two foregoing definitions we perceive, as it were, the two pillars which support the temple of the novel: the sense of truth in which the reader recognizes himself and other real things, and that of poetry from which is born a love of life and human sympathy.

In speaking of truth in novels, the eminent professor, Gaston Pâris, made an impressive statement about fidelity to truth in the opening lecture of his course in literature at the Collège de France. Every novelist should be ready to subscribe to this statement about truth. The novelist has no right to distort the truth, however noble his purpose. If he describes contemporary manners—and very often novelists are the best historians of private life—he must not travesty them. He is required, then, in the name of morality, to make an impossible sacrifice when he is asked to make life honey-sweet; surely you do not ask an artist to tell a lie.

This objective truth runs the risk of being distorted when seen from the personal angle; it is made up only of the appearances offered by reality. Ferdinand Brunetière explained this many years ago in his comprehensive study on the "Literary Movement of the Nineteenth Century," when he insisted that "art and life must mingle together under pain of ceasing to

exist, lest art become balderdash, and life only a function of animality. If it is necessary that they must be blended, it is also necessary, in the second place, that art should be an imitation of nature and life. . . . In the third place, it is necessary that this imitation of nature and life, too frequently attempted by our naturalists in a spirit of pride and irony, should be made in a spirit of kindliness, not to say of charity. . . . This spirit of kindliness, and even charitable-ness, is lacking in our naturalistic school, in a Zola, in a Guy de Maupassant. On the other hand, it gives charm to the novels of Dickens and Alphonse Daudet.

The novel, according to a remark of Stendhal, is truly a mirror held up along the highways. But this mirror ought to show, behind that which it reflects, that which it does not reflect and which art divines. There is a reverse side to everything. The universe is a mystery to which man is always seeking a solution. Where is the solution to be found? Saint Paul said that the world is a system of invisible things visibly manifested. And Massillon: "The whole visible word is made only for an eternal day when nothing more will change. All that we see is merely the symbol and the promise of invisible things . . . God works in time, but for eternity."

If the art of the novel is sounded to its depths,

as, for instance, in Flaubert's "Madame Bovary," as in Sainte-Beuve's "Volupté," as in Alphonse Daudet's "Sapho," far from contradicting Christian morality, it will pay morality an indirect tribute. Study society from top to bottom and you will continually find examples of a phenomenon which, by dint of repetition, assumes the importance of a law; every time that a man, in the course of life, disregards the precepts of Christian morality—and many unbelievers do not disregard them, just as many believers do disregard them, so contradictory is human weakness—he invariably causes disorder, it may be in his own individual life, it may be in the social system.

We, the novelists, who work in material still warm and living, are in perfect agreement with historians who work in material that has been cooled. This disorder sometimes will not manifest itself immediately. As in certain diseases in which the symptoms reveal themselves slowly or induce long illness, this disorder smoulders imperceptibly under an appearance of peace and happiness. Suddenly it breaks out, irresistibly and frightfully; and people go on persisting, consciously or unwittingly blind, in seeking more superficial causes for it. "We are witnesses," once wrote Paul Bourget to me "who are not forbidden to trace things to their causes."

The first novelist who was bold enough to

search back for causes was Balzac, the leader of us all. In the preface to his complete works, with one sharp ray of a searchlight he illuminated the meaning of his observation on life when he said: "By attentively studying the tableau of society, moulded, so to say, from real life, *with all its good and all its evil*, we learn the lesson that if thought, or passion—which includes both thought and emotion—is the element which makes society, it is also the element which destroys society. In this respect social life resembles individual life. We do not give credit to peoples for great age except in showing their vitality. Therefore, education, at any rate that given by religious bodies, is a chief factor in the existence of nations. It is, in fact, the only means capable of diminishing evil and of increasing the sum total of good in society. Thought, the root of evil, as well as of good, may be supplied, dominated, directed *only* by religion. The single religion possible is Christianity; it has created modern nations and it will preserve them."

Again, as I said in "Le Médecin de campagne," "Christianity, and above all Catholicism, having a complete system capable of repressing man's depraved tendencies, is the greatest element of the social order." This is the testimony that Véronique Graslin renders to it in "Le Curé de village," when on her death-

bed she insists upon making a public confession and acknowledging before everyone present, including her servant, that she, an old woman, who had been so highly respected was, in reality, nothing less than a criminal. It is the same tribute that Doctor Benassis pays in "*Le Médecin de campagne*," when unbridled passion might have strangled him.

But there is another Catholic source of power, even more mysterious, that stresses the union of the living with the dead. I refer to the mutual sharing of merits and to the Communion of Saints. Man is never isolated; he is upheld, he is surrounded on every side, he has no right to despair. In one of his shorter masterpieces, "*L'Echéance*," Paul Bourget points out that this transference of merits is the full explanation of family traditions, it is at the base of every explanation and justification of family life.

Every moral law has a social repercussion, and society is made up of families, not of isolated individuals. Do you recall the subject of "*L'Echéance*?" A young doctor, brilliantly gifted, suddenly learns that his education has been received at the price of a theft, that his parents, blinded by their love for him, have embezzled an inheritance in order to give him a fitting education, which, they hoped, would be conducive to his happiness. The true heir is dead. How can the young man repair the

injustice by which he has benefited? Henceforth, what shall be the purpose of his life? He resolves to devote himself to the betterment of his fellow men, to the love of the neighbor and to charity; he will *merit* for his father and mother. Thus he will gain interior peace and a clear conscience. The family, then, is the chief image, the visible image of the Communion of Saints in the sense understood by the Church; the merits gained by past generations protect and shield the present ones and even the errors of those past can be expiated and repaired by the virtues of others.

For errors can be redeemed. There is someone who redeems them. It is precisely the under side of this world eaten by leprosy that can be wrested from evil and be made to live.

The novel, then, will have both truth and poetry; truth, that is the search for the elemental causes which underlie the surface of events; poetry, that is the love of life and of our fellow men.

THE MODERN NOVEL

M. E. FRANCIS

THE great war which is responsible for many changes in modern life, is largely responsible, one would imagine, for a certain new spirit which is so marked a feature of the present-day novel. A great writer once said that though it was easy to convey the sense of tragedy, it was extraordinarily difficult to depict perfect happiness, that perhaps the only way of attaining that end was by contrasting happiness with previous grief and misery. In the same way the salient quality of the modern novel may best be described as the converse of "uplift"—a word for which we British are indebted to our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic.

To a veteran reader this particular quality with all that it entails—the subversion of ideals, the overthrowing of barriers, the blotting out of the lines of demarcation—once so clearly defined—between right and wrong, mars many a brilliant page and frequently enjoyment. I, for one, cannot believe in, or love a heroine who, while purporting to be full of charm, refinement and feminine perfection, nevertheless, obeying dictates which the author assures us are

noble and generous, flatly disregards those commandments the fulfilment of which was once deemed essential to womanly virtue. Neither can I accept the author's standard of manly integrity in a hero who has "outgrown the myths of Christianity," and the humdrum and degrading restraints of ordinary morality; or follow with any interest the adventurous career which leads him through many devious ways to a happy "marriage" with somebody else's wife.

This new spirit shows itself, not merely in the plot, but even in minor details. There is a coarseness, a decadence, a lack of reticence evident everywhere. Moreover, many a page of superfluous nastiness is added which neither develops story nor character, and therefore should, on artistic grounds alone, have been dispensed with.

What a lamentable contrast to the work, at once powerful and delicate, of the writers who catered to our enjoyment before the War. They were not ashamed to hold up beauty and goodness for our admiration; they found time for little tender touches, for poetry, for refinement of style, all of which conduce so largely to the enjoyment of the reader. If their characters erred, as many of their most pathetic creations did err, the appeal made to one's compassion and sympathy was not used to cloak or condone the wrong doing.

There used to be two categories of novels, of which one was purely concerned with romance, while the other claimed to be a faithful presentment of real life and real people. To go back a long way, we may cite Scott as the greatest exponent of the one school and George Eliot of the other, while Thackeray proved himself a past master in both. In later times, Stevenson stood out from all imitators as a romantic narrator of exceptional power and a master of style; his descriptions of nature blending the closest observation with an all-informing poetry. The work of a few of his followers offers some of the most pleasant reading of the present day, telling a good story with plenty of interest but no unwholesomeness, and with a cultivated diction.

But what a host of other names present themselves! What a perfect artist was Mrs. Gaskell, for instance; how humorous and true to life were Trollope's works; how charming a writer was Mrs. Oliphant—but all these belong to a past distant even before the war. In more recent years how joyfully did one hail the advent of a new book by Elizabeth, of German Garden fame, or a novel by either of the Findlater sisters! How enthralling was the spell of George Seton Merriman, how amusing the pages of Martin Ross and E. Æ. Somerville! Some of E. B. Brenner's novels were charming, and

though the work of Mrs. Humphrey Ward often contained matter unacceptable to Catholics, her power and skill were undeniable, and her English uniformly good. I have mentioned but a few—many others will occur to the reader.

We welcomed from the other side of the Atlantic the works of Ellen Glasgow, of Margaret Deland, of Anne Douglas Sedgwick. Richard Harding Davis stood out among his fellows, while Mary Wilkins' little miniatures were pure delight. The latter author's "Portion of Labour" proves that she can do strong and convincing work on a larger canvas. This book, and Ellen Glasgow's "One Man in his Time," are powerful studies of modern conditions.

Rarely, nowadays, does one come across a book which recalls the almost forgotten delights of the past; but now and then one takes up an unpretentious little volume which, though the author is perhaps unknown to fame, proves to be a bit of salvage from the wreckage. "The House Made with Hands" came as a pleasant surprise to many of us, and Edna Ferber's "Fanny Herself" is a fresh and interesting study of life in a great emporium.

Many American writers still keep a high standard, and the great American magazines are faithful to traditions which, with rare exceptions, seem to be lost in England. Nevertheless

in the United States, as in Britain, there are signs of the *débauché*. Decadence of thought vies with carelessness of style; sloppy sentiment alternates with crude violence and unchecked passion. That which was once considered unmentionable is not only mentioned but blared forth as with a megaphone.

Once upon a time readers were for the most part cultured, or at least sufficiently educated to be able to appreciate a fine thought as well as a good story; they were fastidious with regard to style as well as matter, and demanded verisimilitude in some cases, the vividly rendered spell of romance in others. A new book by a well-known author was eagerly expected, closely criticized and frequently discussed.

The hurry of modern life, the new conditions of society have practically swept away this class. People are too busy week-ending, motoring, giving strange or costly entertainments, to have time to do more than cast a cursory glance at a magazine after they have looked at the paper. Many of the most popular magazines provide fiction of the film type, with scarcely more attention to character or details than is demanded by the screen. This no doubt produces the crudities and wild improbabilities so noticeable in the homeopathic short-story of today.

One asks oneself whether this redundant supply of inferior and deleterious matter has been

called forth by an imperative demand, or whether the new class of readers have accommodated themselves to the literary fare set before them. How often during the War were people forced to frequent restaurants where "edible offal" of various kinds formed the chief items of the menu? They swallowed it for lack of something better.

Is it the new type of reader which has produced the new type of writer, or vice versa? After all, I think the reader is chiefly to blame, for alas many authors whose work had previously kept to a high level, have now seen fit to prostitute their art. With what sickening disappointment is one overcome on seeing that a beloved and hitherto wholly reliable writer has sought for inspiration not in the pure and sparkling stream whence springs refreshment and delight, but in the malodorous and mud where so many ideals have been buried. *Et tu, Brute!* we sigh, when it dawns upon us that this one or that one is making an appeal to the baser instincts of humanity, and not, as of yore, to the sublimer elements which distinguish man from the beast.

Novels by Catholic authors at one time formed a class of their own, and the influence of Catholic tenets pervaded every page. Some of these books no doubt appealed exclusively to members of their own Faith, but others obtained

a wider circulation. In these our times, however, the general contagion seems to have touched more than one of our Catholic novelists. Some, as for instance, Mrs. Wilfrid Ward and Montgomery Carmichael, though treating of these very problems, never lower the standard of the Faith and never overstep the boundaries of Catholic reticence. But there are many others, alas, who perhaps with a desire to prove themselves large-minded and up-to-date, offer us work scarcely distinguishable from that of their confreres of other religions or of no religion at all. If they do not actually condone wickedness they depict it as natural and inevitable to latter-day conditions. They seem eager to show that their Catholicism in no way hampers them; they can be as morbid, as decadent, as outspoken as anybody else.

"Let it not so much as be named among you," is a precept that seems to be forgotten. And yet when it is realized that the new class of reader includes many young and half-educated people, Catholic authors, at least, should take responsibilities seriously. If every idle word that men shall speak is to be accounted for, what a responsibility attaches to the *written* word, the effects of which may continue to work harmfully long after the hand which carelessly indited it has become dust. It is often startling to see novels of this kind included in the catalogues

of Catholic lending libraries, having simply been included owing to the known fact of the author's Catholicism.

Was it Saint Columba or another monastic saint of ancient days who, while transcribing manuscripts was aided in the task, after darkness had set in, by the light which came from his own finger? No doubt, those who pored over the result of his labors knew nothing of this fact, yet there must have been a certain virtue in the page over which that saintly hand had traveled, a certain spiritual emanation which conveyed even more than the written word.

If one might dare to make such a comparison, might it not be said that the work of a Catholic writer should carry with it a special quality due to the Faith that is within him? Surely the radiance of Catholic ideals which, if he is true to his religion, shines in his own soul, should, even if unperceived by the reader, as was the luminous hand of long ago, insensibly make its influence felt.

"Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house."

THE CATHOLIC NOVELIST

FRANK H. SPEARMAN

MY title is patient of more than one definition. I should describe it as properly referring to one who professes the Faith and informs his work with a Catholic philosophy; and I should add, that I write concerning Catholic novelists who write in English.

It has been maintained that a distinction is to be drawn between Catholics that write fiction, and Catholics whose fiction pertains to or portrays the reactions of the Catholic Faith on human nature; and that the latter alone are rightfully entitled to the designation of Catholic novelists.

Father Matthew Russell, the distinguished Irish Jesuit, brother of England's Chief Justice, Lord Russell of Killowen, held that one who, while professing the Faith, held himself responsible to the Catholic viewpoint concerning life and morals, qualified properly as a Catholic novelist, whether he wrote "Catholic" novels or merely secular novels.

Father Russell recognized the twin facts that our Catholic novelist, as I define him, writes for a livelihood, and likewise that he writes for

a non-Catholic public. He is thus confronted with the difficulty that in offering a novel devoted to the Catholic Faith, he will be in imminent danger of finding himself, as far as readers are concerned, in the position of the lecturer addressing only empty benches.

Prescinding from the ideas of the critics to come to the viewpoint of the novelist himself, the first thought will be that the reactions of the Faith are no more nearly constant on Catholic novelists than they are on Catholic plumbers or Catholic policemen. In the character of the novelist's work, everything will depend on what his Faith may mean to him personally. If he wear it as an overcoat, to be put on and off with the accidents of weather, its influence will, of course, be negligible. But it may dawn on him, that in his Faith he possesses the most precious inheritance in all the world. When that day finally comes, it cannot fail signally to influence his work.

The visibility of this influence will depend, naturally, on the character of the story he is writing. If much of that which he holds most vital can be shown in the work, much will be shown; if but little, then little. It may stand revealed only in cryptic touches. But to those who comprehend, its influence, much or little, will be unmistakable; as Father Daniel E. Hudson, our Catholic editor with the most sensitive

literary finger-tips, has said, the Catholic note will be there. This it is, then, it seems to me, that identifies and stamps the Catholic novelist—not the achieving of everything in the exposition of a Catholic theme that zealous Catholic critics may expect, but, irreducibly, in reflecting in his literary work this Catholic spirit.

Whatever the decision as to what constitutes the Catholic novelist, there are two classes of novels that may claim recognition as Catholic. The one is the story, wholly Catholic, which is written to appeal frankly to the Catholic reader; the other, the novel with a Catholic background—that is, with a plot turning on some beautiful truth or dramatic situation involving an aspect of the Catholic Faith, and written primarily to appeal to the non-Catholic reader. Such a novel must be written with that reader in view who will scan critically every word pertaining to a strange and somewhat unwelcome subject.

Yet it is a worthwhile problem, it has seemed to me, this of reaching the non-Catholic reader with even fragments of Catholic truth. A novel is only one way in which to do this, but today it is not a way to be despised. The usual novel of today is the very hotbed of every sort of propaganda from the immoral to the insane—political and economic, religious and atheistic, rational and irrational. It is a medium through

which millions of readers reach conclusions concerning the vital questions of life.

Catholic fictionists, at least those that take their religion seriously, can least afford to ignore such opportunities to express their convictions. To keep silent, to withhold from their work that one incomparable message needed by the world and offered by their Faith, is, it seems to me, almost criminal; and Catholic publicists can least afford to ignore such efforts to make the Catholic note heard. It is a matter for continual surprise, that there are so many precious souls outside our Faith and groping for a spiritual haven, who will not disclose a word of their longings to priest or to layman, but will turn even to a public library for books that will enlighten them on our Faith.

When our novelist is confronted with the problem of his medium of publication, he must choose either a Catholic publisher, or a secular publisher. Marion Crawford, in discussing his novels with the dean of our Catholic editors, Father Hudson of the *Ave Maria*, once observed—drily, I imagine—that he had an expensive family to support. If the novelist has to think of an expensive family or of such luxuries as eating and drinking, he will find it necessary to write secular novels and to build up a secular following; and this is likely to be done through a secular publisher.

With such a following once established, the novelist is largely the master of his own choice of stories and of their treatment. If he wish to present any aspect of Catholic truth to the non-Catholic public—that is, to those who really need it—the secular publication medium affords him the opportunity. I have heard it objected, that if one choose a Catholic publisher, his work will be read only by priests and nuns. Personally, I should be very proud on every ground to welcome such a circle of readers. Yet it is true—as I have sometimes been at pains to remind sympathetic Religious—that novels are written, not for saints, but for sinners; saints need no novels. Anything that may awaken in the weak, the ignorant or the worldly Catholic even a partial appreciation of the treasure he possesses in his Faith—the Faith that is able to lift him so high above those that lack knowledge of it—must have its value. There are, unhappily, Catholics like the man who having closed his eyes resolutely to the sun, deems himself in great fortune to live cheek by jowl with other pretentious worldlings, in the cave light of tallow candles.

A further consideration for the novelist is the least, unless, indeed, there be bills to pay. A novel setting forth clearly the Catholic note—will be found to sell from a third to a half the number of copies of a purely secular story. Our

novelist must sacrifice a serial return for such a work because a secular editor will dodge it; and for the same reason, the substantial return from motion-picture rights will be of more moment to his heirs than to himself. I refer to the heirs because there can be no question but that the day is coming when this editorial timidity will wear wholly away and the Catholic note on the screen will be not alone tolerated but sought for in this country. Our great Catholic centers such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, will one day take, eagerly, Catholic films presenting dramatic aspects of the reactions of the Faith on present-day American life. The time is, in matter of fact, already here, but the Mussolini among producers who is to make the big hit by discovering this has not yet revealed himself.

Our Catholic publisher likewise has *his* problems, and of these, perhaps, the most serious is distribution. The conservatism of the earlier day old-country methods, has been relegated to the background latterly by young and enterprising American Catholic publishers who advertise and push their offerings in vigorous, secular fashion; and at least one of our leading secular publishers has undertaken an important Catholic list, while others show sympathetic Catholic spirit toward Catholic books. But the distribution of purely Catholic literature is still confined

almost wholly to the Catholic bookstore, and this in turn must depend largely on the patronage of Religious—an admirable following, and a steadily increasing one; but in present-day circumstances, the larger secular following must be sought through a secular publisher.

There is, it is true, a Catholic laity that buys novels. But in this book-buying laity there is a large element who, aspiring to be thought of the intelligentsia by their non-Catholic acquaintance, buy, parrot-like, the novels talked of by such friends. I have known these sophisticated, or unsophisticated, Catholics naively to recommend books like "The Four Horsemen." They consider it a virtue of tolerance to take smilingly the sneers and jibes leveled at their Faith, and resemble nothing so much as those vaudeville comedians a part of whose "business" it is to be kicked; the only difference being that the comedian is paid for being kicked, while the Catholic novel-buyers of this sort cheerfully pay for the privilege.

With the preliminary difficulties overcome, the writing of the novel designed to present to non-Catholic readers one or more of the moving or dramatic aspects of the Faith completed, and the secular publisher found to launch the book, the novelist's hopes will run high: but there may yet be surprises ahead.

From one class of reviewers, he can count on

hostility; these are both of the camouflaged and open anti-Catholic sort; but they have their adverse influence in the sale of his book. A second class will be faced in the better secular periodicals where his work will be judged from the personal angle of the reviewer. In exceptional cases—getting to the very best of such periodicals—he may look for some intelligent estimate of the value of his work as a contribution toward literature. In general, constructive criticism from the average reviewer, is the last thing that any novelist need look for.

A third class of critics remain, and these are the Catholic editor-reviewers. Among our Catholic editors, there are a few outstanding men who accord the most cordial welcome to a Catholic novel of the sort I am referring to here. Their generosity, their tolerance, and their encouragement, is one of the few real rewards for the writer. Yet in quarters in which he may have hoped for countenance, he may hope in vain. He may find his story handled in a blundering note, or be flippantly accused of trying to do good by stealth. It may even happen that notice of work that has taken years to perfect, will be tucked away in half a dozen lines of fine print, in one corner of the periodical which accepts without protest the designation of the leading Catholic review. These are literary trials. If they be taken as an exercise in humil-

ity, they will rival those prescribed by St. Ignatius.

Coming to our novelist's equipment: we must recognize the fact that the talents are distributed by our Creator quite unequally; and that a man-child is born into the world endowed wholly without regard to orthodox lines. Much, nevertheless, will depend on the training that the native endowment receives, and this will, as the youth matures and reflects, usually constitute his body of views of life—let us say, his mental furnishings. In respect to talent, it is not possible to endow; in training, it is.

And if I were to name what seems to me to constitute the inestimable thing of value to the Catholic novelist, it would be a grounding from earliest childhood in the Catholic Faith and its long story. This is the one thing, talent apart, that gives him an incomparable advantage for our day and our country in his criticism of life. If he possess the historic sense—and if he does not, he should not write novels—the riches of the story of European civilization are by this sesame opened to him as an inheritance, not as coming a strange thing from a stranger, as must be the case with the non-Catholic novelist, but as his rightful estate bequeathed to him by his own forebears.

There are to be found, in our day and environment, innumerable viewpoints of life colored

with every conceivable extravagance of paganism and heresy. Novelists like others, are influenced by at least one of these views, often by a congeries of them. But there is one viewpoint that surveys, commands and weighs these confusing variations and contradictions from incomparably higher ground—that is the Catholic viewpoint. To the extent to which our novelist can saturate himself with the history and philosophy of his Faith, he equips himself best to understand and portray the human comedy as the world has known it for two thousand years. And were a young novelist to ask me what to read for material, I should recommend him to the Bible and to the Lives of the Saints who were, so many of them, at one time or another, possessed of our common frailties in extremely picturesque degrees.

Study and reflection will gradually reveal to such a beginner the fact that Europe possesses an opulence of material for his study of human nature in its grandiose reactions, to which America does not yet lay claim; and for him the salient point in this revelation is that Europe is his own Catholic Faith; and that as compared to America, it is twenty centuries against one. The ablest English-speaking literary critic of our day, W. C. Brownell, in comparing Cooper, our greatest novelist, with Balzac whom Henry James calls "the master of us all," remarks that

"Nothing, it is true, is more romantic than nature except nature plus man. But the exception is prodigious." Europe supplies precisely this exception.

It is as valuable to us for study as to the European novelist for background. Nor will it escape the student that the modern pagans of Europe from the Immortals to the unspeakable—from the author of *Faust* to the mutilator of *Thais*—have drawn on Catholic opulence for their tragedies. To them, Catholicity may well say with Samson: "If you had not ploughed with my heifer you had not found out my riddle." If the sense of sin be lost, the sense of tragedy is lost; and neither unmoral barnyards nor brothel imaginations can re-create it, perseveringly though they may toil in the attempt today.

WHY "CATHOLIC" NOVELIST?

LUCILLE BORDEN

"HARE Street, Buntingford, something like a rabbit," Father Benson had said when explaining the way to his house, and it was at Hare Street, Buntingford, he answered a question.

"Why did he no longer write historical novels?"

"They take too long, too much time for study and research. I can write two of the shorter stories in a year."

"Why?"

"Each one is written with a definite object, to draw souls to the knowledge of God and the Church."

His answer has been the inspiration of more than one Catholic novelist today. If one knew the Church one must know the brief reason why the novelist of the Faith writes as he does. Robert Hugh Benson had declared it in one of his own pertinent phrases.

The wearisome reiteration of the reading world, "self-expression," needs little defining to carry meaning of the truths embedded in a Catholic soul. His religion is as much part of his life as the beat of his heart, so necessarily is it

entwined in and about whatever theme he may have selected for his story. "To draw souls to the knowledge of God and the Church" it is not necessary to preach. That part is better left in the hands of the priest. But Faith to be taught must be lived, must be background for characters given ability to show its beauty and consolation to such as can take it in. Not everyone does, but even the man who cannot read beneath the printed page must in some manner be made to feel the subtlety of a message whose inception is of the Infinite who gives power to the author to write.

A clever appreciation of Catholic authorship has recently been written, out of an old city along the Mississippi: "You were not writing for the *cognoscenti* but for the educated upper middle classes who inhabit an atmosphere of sublime ignorance, whereof they are entirely innocent. But that sort, and that means most people I think, needs what the majority of children want, above all a story. Tell them that first—that's plot; charm them with the way in which you tell it—that's style; and sprinkle it all with little drops of spiritual stimulus, which is—why, you do it."

Generally speaking, the Catholic romance is an allegory, so much is the life invisible mixed up with our everyday manner of living. One must believe in the allegory, for to be success-

ful, one must first be sincere, then march ahead.

Someone recently made the assertion that the Catholic Church is arrogant. When questioned as to the grounds on which the statement was made, the answer given was that the Church thought everyone should believe as she did. Not arrogance, indeed, but love, it would seem. She has a great treasure and would share it. "Eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" on the one hand. On the other: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life and I will raise him up." Closed in the tabernacles of the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church alone, is the Bread of Life. It would seem worth the novelist's while to bring such knowledge to the threshold of him who would know it in no other way. For the world is filled with busy men who read only romantic fiction and the newspaper, with women and men who never meditate or hear the word of Christ. Since they will not or cannot bring themselves to the Source, why not carry the Source to them? Surely it is love, not arrogance that would share with all others the beauty of time, the radiance of Eternity? "One fold and one Shepherd," the very essence of a democracy that has its being in the beating Heart concealed within the Blessed Sacrament!

From cycle to cycle the great masters have

received their finer vision from Mother Church, else we would not have had our Michael Angelos, Raphaels, Berninis, nor the glorious gamut of Gregorians.

Why not make of the novel as fine an art? The ambition of the Catholic romanticist is not merely to tell his story. It is to tell the story that will make men think along lines more than right. In our thoughtless era to make them think at all is something of an achievement; but to lift thought higher than the common rut, to feed souls starving for what they know not, to turn drab to gold not for the hour of reading but for the rest of disheartened life, must be a work of love, not of arrogance. What more kind than to attempt, even though one fail, to pour out the treasury of the Faith in places where had been only dull monotony?

Dickens had the right idea in as far as he knew. He wound about his clever tales the need for great reform. And he succeeded. He, as well as Thackeray and Scott, Ainsworth, Meredith, Brontë, George Eliot, each in his or her individual way, aimed through clouds at a concealed star and reached it. To an extent Sinclair Lewis today has done the same thing in his unutterable portrayal of Babbitt, the hopelessly dull mediocrities of Main Street. Reform, yes.

But the convert son of Canterbury's Arch-

bishop has pointed his arrow into that Sun whose rays were encastled in the fastnesses of His own glowing spirit. The horizon opened and there trooped forth men and women eager to make of our unquestionable Dark Age, a reincarnation of the spiritual brilliance of the thirteenth century; John Ayscough, Montgomery Carmichael, Michael Williams, Enid Dinnis, they cannot see why, even through blatant noise and mad materialism, the remaining "little group of Christians in a Pagan world" should not follow along the one line of pure and perfect artistry, born in a stable, dead on a cross, risen through the sealed and guarded gateway of a tomb.

The author is not responsible for being an author any more than he is accountable for his own gift of life. God's providence provides all thought and expression of it, conditions in which to write. The only thing the novelist is asked to do, is to bring to his work a will conformed to God's. Alone he is powerless. Since the motivation of his pen is of Heaven's heights, to attempt its debasement would seem more than a pity. Stagnant pools are commonplace and everywhere, two things lie in the slime at the bottom of them: a millstone, and tied about it, a rope. The author's accountableness is very great when one considers the Master's words

with regard to these two things, and hurt to the least of His little ones.

"Human interest!" Another stereotyped cry. Who more divinely human than Jesus Christ, our Lord? Where interest more enthralling than that begotten of His life? It takes neither genius nor imagination to write of the unwritable. Anyone can do it, even a child were it not for the innocence of the child. Garish, it lies full to view in almost any street of any city. One blesses God that human interest is confined neither to the manners nor the morals of a society made lower by modern-day ethics.

Through all of it, the Everlasting is. Neither blatanche nor clamor can draw the human heart away from the lessons of Bethlehem, Calvary, the waters of Galilee and Easter morning. Not arrogance, not that, but love which takes the longer way about to avoid the pools that stagnate, to reach the clear ocean truth. One's feet may bleed, one's hands may be torn, one may burn in the flame of a noonday heat, but Another led along a path more dolorous still.

No timely object so vital, no abuse so evil, no want so paramount, no temptation so alluring, that the Church has not been there ages and ages before with her reasons, her laws, her pronouncements. As Divinity is timeless, as the Church is the mouthpiece of the Divine, so are her definitions made by Christ in the beginning,

changeless. "The Holy Ghost will teach her all truth and I Myself will abide with her forever."

And it all makes the novelist's work easier. With a scope that is boundless as things of eternity are boundless, the lines beyond which he may not step are clearly defined. The unerring affirmation of the Church behind him, he is safe. What more logical than to take a disputed theme of the day or other days, weave it into a romance, interlace through it the dictum of ecclesiastical authority?

Should it be a question of ethics or theology probably not one person out of a hundred would trouble to study it analytically. Ninety out of that same hundred would be interested in the novel that analyses it for them. More, they would accept the standpoint of the novelist. Herein lies the writer's responsibility, for any assumption of the Church's attitude is more than that, it is a sacred trust.

"It sounds serious. It is entirely void of humor." The little window in Enid Dinnis' "Anchorhold" is wreathed about with green vines and lies above a rose-strewn garden path. Flipkin frolics in the sunshine there, and more than once the tinkle of laughter rises. There Lady Editha's pride is all forgotten in her radiant peace. No humor? Yes, that little window

in itself is purest contemplation at one with the grace of Heaven.

Carmichael's Christopher only loses his sense of humor when he forsakes the way of Cressida which was a blessed way. The gentle satire of Lady Poverty is matched only by the Franciscan simplicity with which the Friars respond to it. Both Montgomery Carmichael and Enid Dinis have caught the sparkling lightness of touch somehow gifted to those whose work is mirror-clear in the joy of Christ, our Lord. Not arrogance, never that, but love. There lies truth in smallest compass.

Time undoubtedly was in which the religious or Catholic novel was taboo. That was in very pre-War days. Perhaps it is better to say it was before the coming of the legion of angels, before the merciful ministrations of The White Christ. However it be, it was before men began to think. Naturally there are religious novels and religious novels. There are stories that are stories, there are tales that are literature, there are romances that are classics, Catholic, essentially Catholic romances, under no guise other than that of themselves, under no camouflage. And—in these times in which men have learned to think, the heart of most Christians thrills at sight or sound of them. It is very simple. One loves to look at pictures of familiar places, one listens entranced to familiar music, the older its

melody, the more entrancing it is. One wants the old stories, over and over again if one be a child. Just so, the things that are familiar to a Catholic appeal to him. The intrinsic dedication of every Catholic novel is—to the Best Friend of the reader.

Today's interest may be strong, but in the tomorrow—far-off tomorrow when religion shall be the all and sum total, the paramount adventure of a more enlightened era, then shall the Catholic novel come into its own. The novelist of today will not be, when the lamps are lighted. But the novel will be. Posterity will be. Today's reading public may not have contributed very much to the material success of the writer. But tomorrow's public will have a different point of view, and because the conscientious Catholic writer was quite willing to forego the lesser gain, posterity will be richer in treasureful romance. After all, in the long run the religious novelist who has stood firmly on principle, will not have been the loser.

THE APOSTOLATE OF THE NOVEL

ISABEL C. CLARKE

LOOKING back I am convinced that the books that influenced me most profoundly in my own career were the "School for Saints" and "Robert Orange" by the late Mrs. Craigie (John Oliver Hobbes), and in a lesser degree, perhaps, the more intimately Catholic novel "One Poor Scruple" by Mrs. Wilfrid Ward.

At that time, more than a quarter of a century ago, the Catholic novel written in such manner as to make it acceptable to the general public was in its weakly and tentative infancy.

But the books I have mentioned created an interest in Catholic fiction which even induced other writers to try their hands at it. They clearly demonstrated that it could be as successful and arresting in its human interest as any other form of fiction. Thus we find Mrs. Humphrey Ward attempting with considerable success a novel with a Catholic hero. Catholic readers could not fail to detect many a flaw in the armor and equipment of "Helbeck of Hannisdale"; still he remains unquestionably one of the most sympathetic figures the famous author-

ess ever drew. Something of a portrait, so it is said, of her own father, Thomas Arnold, he yet betrayed no hint of the vacillation that tormented that weak, brilliant and persecuted figure whose periodical emergences into Catholicism were so dreaded by his family seeing that they synchronized with days of penury consequent upon the loss of appointment and salary.

Mrs. Craigie's brilliant pen, her power of depicting cosmopolitan crowds, international intrigues, and political personages whether real or fictitious, her acute insight into psychology and life, her biting gift of epigram never for an instant concealed the immense Catholic value, the profound spiritual purpose, of her two outstanding novels. She died in early middle age, and did not introduce definitely Catholic motif into her books until her reputation was already established. Then there appeared in rapid succession "The School for Saints" and "Robert Orange," one of the rare instances in which a sequel has surpassed its predecessor. Speaking for myself, at that time outside the Fold yet conscious already of a growing desire for intimate union, these books were at once a help and an inspiration. They taught me two lessons; first how Catholicism could rule the lives of men and women sauely and yet inexorably, and secondly how great and far reaching could be the

apostolate of the novel, bringing light into dark places.

The description of the "Bona Mors" service at Farm Street in the "School for Saints" with its detailed account of Benediction, made an immediate appeal to me. Something of the beauty of the Church stole into those graphically-written pages; one sensed that the author was a Catholic and was writing with passion of things that she both knew and loved. I was never from that day to forget that even the novel, the most ephemeral and generally the most trivial of all literature, could be pressed into the service of that Church that has ever made use of the simplest as well as the rarest things in her ceaseless work for the salvation of men.

"How absurd to be influenced by a novel!" We have all heard those scornful words. But even a novel can occasionally teach us something of an aspect of life hitherto unfamiliar to us. No one could readily forget that poignant scene in the "School for Saints" when Brigit refuses to obey her father and divorce Wrexham Parflete. Little more than a child and fresh from her convent school, she is made to say: "The word divorce has no meaning for me. I am a Catholic." She spoke with complete authority, not of herself but aware that thus she epitomized the teaching of the Church in relation to the indissolubility of the bond of matrimony.

As the novel deals eternally with love and marriage, and as readers continue to demand a strong love-interest whether illicit or otherwise, it is scarcely possible for the Catholic novelist not to touch, as Mrs. Craigie did, upon the Church's inexorable attitude towards this Sacrament. Perhaps, too, this is more than ever necessary at the present time in order to counteract the trend of so much immoral fiction that deliberately panders to the growing contempt for the sanctity and for the permanence of the marriage tie.

Of late years the novel has undergone a profound and highly significant change. It is no longer a thing of defined and carefully-woven plot, though the story is still what unquestionably matters most.* But it is still more than ever a transcript from life as the author views it. No branch of knowledge, whether philosophical, scientific, historical or even agricultural, but can claim its place and evoke interest in the pages of fiction. The novel touches modern thought in all its aspects and reflects modern life in all its manifold phases. It conserves the idiom of the generation to which it belongs. In years to come it is possible that much of the present-day fiction may throw a valuable light upon contemporary history, seeing that history concerns itself now quite as much with manners, and customs and thought as with kings and politics and

. . . old unhappy far-off things
And battles long ago.

The post-War novel dealing with the new conditions, the cataclysmic changes that have come about since the great conflict, may possess for latter generations a more than transitory interest, and will provide students with an inexhaustible source from which to acquire a real knowledge of the manners, idiom and outlook, the aims and ambitions of the generation that is now springing up. Thus the novel to possess real value must have both truth and vision. However small a field or narrow a furrow the author chooses in which to work, he must represent life as he sees and knows it, and must describe that world with which he has practical acquaintance. Across this stratum of truth, imagination may fling what illuminated veils she will. The bricks are to her hand for the raising of the edifice of her dreams.

It is because the Catholic differs from other men, inasmuch as his life is ruled by fixed laws and rules for moral conduct, that he must, I think, always find some difficulty in excluding religion from the novel of character, seeing the immense part it must necessarily play. He may write excellent detective stories or novels of adventure and action without revealing his faith, but where character and motive are to be analyzed or reactions interpreted religion cannot

fail to step in. For, in moments of dilemma the Catholic is inevitably influenced by the dogmas and laws of his Church. He may disregard them if he so choose, but if he sins he sins wilfully, knowing that he is breaking her immutable laws. He has no choice beyond what his free will allows him, nor can he courageously cast aside convention and expect applause from his own conscience, a course which almost invariably elicits the approbation of the critics.

As the Catholic Church has its own sharply defined, logical and dogmatic teaching, changeless where all else is so cruelly changed, so the Catholic author is able to introduce that message into his work, giving it thereby something of permanent value. He can reveal the peace and harmony that reign eternally within her divine portals when all other churches and religious bodies are torn and rent with schisms and dissensions and vainly attempted compromises, futile and unsatisfying. And although the critics are never apt to smile upon the novel with a purpose, deeming it inartistic, it has ever commanded the attention of serious and thoughtful men and women.

The religious novel is certain, if not of *the* public, of *a* public and that by no means an inconsiderable one. It stands as great a chance of success as any other. There is space and to spare for the Catholic novel in the immense out-

put of fiction today, indeed it sometimes seems the only uncrowded field. For, even if religion plays but a subordinate part in a book, its influence upon conduct and morality can be felt and its message delivered. But the actual work must not fall short of any other in technique, style, and human interest whether the latter be realistic or romantic. There is, it is well to remember, no section of society in any land today that is unaffected by Catholicism, and the rather wistfully manifested interest in religion awakened by the grim experience of the War has created a demand which only the Catholic writer can adequately supply.

The field is a wide one since the Catholic religion touches life at all points, and reactions to the Faith are always of paramount psychological interest. Conversion alone can supply a fruitful theme for the Catholic novel since it is a profound regenerative experience, intimately linked with the great drama of the soul. Monsignor Benson used this theme more than once in his novels with fire and dexterity. Swift, alive and full of nervous power, his physical frame was too frail to sustain the demands of the flaming spirit within it, and he lived too short a time to attain perfection in his art. The youngest but not the least gifted of a famous band of brothers, no list of contemporary authors could claim completeness without the inclusion of his

name. We personally owe more to him than perhaps to any other writer seeing that he did more than anyone to popularize the Catholic novel, demonstrating to unwilling publishers its pecuniary value. He was read with avidity by all sorts and conditions of men; his scanty leisure was overwhelmingly occupied with correspondence addressed to innumerable inquirers on whom his books had bestowed their first glimpse of the truth.

The novel has its own apostolate; it comes into contact with countless minds and goes whither learned or pious books may possibly never penetrate. Thus we cannot limit or measure its influence or dwell too much upon the responsibility of the author. Who can tell to what remote region of the globe his written word may travel, or to what unknown reader that message may provide adequate and satisfying replies? It may indeed reach someone who has never before heard a single word in praise of the Catholic Church nor any whisper of her eternal truth, perdurable beauty and holiness.

The Catholic author should never forget that he writes more for those without than for those within the Fold. What is mere commonplace knowledge to us may conceivably be a new and rare revelation to those who stand hungry, cold and astray outside the gates. It rests with us almost as much as with the preacher to de-

molish age-old prejudices, the long accepted untruths which continue to vilify the Church. It rests with us, too, to show her teaching upon social problems, on marriage, family life, the Catholic training of children, the call to religious vocation.

A novelist dealing with Catholic characters can hardly fail to deal with some or all of these important questions. And he possesses also his own inexhaustible spiritual experience upon which to draw, in all due reticence and reverence. If he is a convert he knows something, however imperfectly, of that strange spiritual regeneration that showed him a new heaven and a new earth. He can reveal something of the sweetness of that intimate appeal, and can even delicately lift the veil to disclose a little of that path upon which he himself traveled to reach the goal.

In all great work there must be, as has been wisely said, a touch of passion. There comes a moment in all fiction when the chill Olympian objectivity of the author must be cast aside, and that is inevitably when his pen deals with something that is of superlative and passionate personal interest. He descends upon the stage, he mingles with the players, he seems almost to take part in the drama of his own imagining. What touches him profoundly, claiming his love and invincible loyalty, is bound to awaken a

responsive cord in the hearts of at least some of his readers. The seed thus sown cannot but fall occasionally upon fruitful soil.

There is no reason why a Catholic novel should not attain to the degree of fame enjoyed in bygone years by "John Inglesant" and "Robert Elsmere." Despite the brilliant work of John Oliver Hobbes, Mrs. Wilfrid Ward, Monsignor Benson and other pioneers who have worked the same field, the great Catholic novel has still to be written. But the ice is broken, the way is paved, the world is awake and aware; to some young brave hand will perhaps be accorded the power to carry aloft that super torch.

THE ROMANTIC NOVEL

ELIZABETH JORDAN

THE occasion was a literary luncheon, and the unliterary wife of one of the lions in the party was suddenly moved to express an indirect opinion of a popular novel under discussion.

"All I've got to say is this," she emphatically declared. "I don't want to meet in books the sort of people I shouldn't enjoy meeting in real life, so I don't care anything about stories of criminals and the underworld."

A literary man who sat beside me chuckled delightedly and dropped a sudden confidence into my ear.

"So there really are persons who say that sort of thing," he murmured. "I've heard that there were, but I never believed it."

The guest who did not like to meet unpleasant persons, either in novels or out of them, proceeded to develop her theme.

"When I pick up a book," she blithely continued, "I want to be entertained in a pleasant, agreeable way, by pleasant, agreeable people. I don't want to be instructed, or depressed, or preached to. Neither do I want to be shown a realistic cross-section of my own life, with a

crying baby in the foreground to lend atmosphere. I want to forget my personal life and the disappointments and worries I may have. I want to be transported to a different world than my own, in which interesting men and women have unusual and entertaining experiences. I don't care a rap whether the characters or the experiences are true to everyday life," she defiantly added. "In fact, I'd rather they weren't. I don't even care whether the situations are plausible. But I do demand of men and women in books what I mentally demand of men and women I meet in real life—that they hold my attention and interest."

I expressed to the critical author at my side my conviction that the speaker was putting roughly a preference most of us share, a preference for so-called "romantic" literature. Of course we could not go as far as she did, and eliminate the questions of art and sincerity; but at heart, I maintained, the majority of us are still children, eager for fairy tales and bedtime stories. He disagreed with me and made an impassioned plea for realism, and we both enjoyed the argument. Downed though I may have been, the subject of so-called "realism" versus so-called "romance" in fiction lingered in my mind, and perhaps explains why I am carrying on the argument here—where no one can interrupt.

It may be as well to begin by asking what realism is, and what romance is, and loosely to define realism in fiction as fidelity to nature and life, as truth without idealization. What then is romance? Webster defines a romance as "any fictitious and wonderful tale" and a romantic novel as "now, especially, a sort of novel characterized by adventure, surprising incident, etc." Fictitiousness he defines as, "of, pertaining to, or like fiction."

Where does all this lead us? A realistic novel is fiction. So is a romantic novel. And a romantic novel, "especially now," to quote Mr. Webster, can give us as much fidelity to nature and as much "realism" as any realistic novel ever written. In other words, we have passed the point of regarding a novel as "romantic" merely because it contains "adventure and surprising incident." We know "especially now" that life itself contains more "adventure and surprising incident" than can be put into any novel. The mental attitude toward the possible and the impossible has changed. We see the "impossible" happening every day. We are no longer sure, either in life or in fiction, where realism ends and romance begins. But most of us are frankly looking for a certain entertainment in both; and we are glad that "especially now" we can find entertainment in so-called

“romantic fiction” without the charge of feeble-mindedness.

Obviously, the sort of entertainment we seek as fiction readers depends on the quality of our individual taste and its development. If we are seekers of knowledge and of inspiration, we look for these things outside of contemporary fiction. When we are resting our minds, we turn to stories in much the same spirit in which we turned to them in our babyhood. In thus turning, we trustfully put ourselves for the time being into the hands of the author to whom we turn; and I maintain that when that author leads us to the sordid or the unbeautiful or the indecent he is betraying us as shamefully as we betray a child to whom we tell a tragic story just before it goes to sleep.

What most of us desire him to do, if we are normal, healthy human beings, is to lead us into a new environment, as the wife of the literary lion put it—not an impossible or an absurd one, but a recognizable and interesting one, which derives most of its charm from its difference to the environment we happen to know best, and there to show us interesting backgrounds, characters and episodes.

Several of the most brilliant lawyers and financiers I know give their leisure hours to the reading of lurid detective fiction. But to these lawyers and financiers those detective yarns

are "romantic" fiction, *their* fairy tales, just as the weird yarns about Western outlaws are "romantic fiction" to the average small boy. Both these classes of readers are right in their classification. Such fiction *is* "romantic," and it is the only really "romantic" fiction that exists today.

Those of us who still insist that life can be beautiful, despite the shrieks to the contrary of the so-called "realists," like to find in our fiction normal, recognizable, well-conducted, red-blooded, lovable men and women, passing through episodes and crises in life which conceivably might happen to any of us, but which are usually more entertaining when they happen to others. These crises need not include battle, murder or sudden death. Neither should they include incest or adultery. They must include love and adventure and contest of some kind if they are to hold our interest. And of course the cultivated and sophisticated among us look to the manner of an author's recital as much as we do to its matter. Since we are seeking beauty—and we are, whether or not we realize it—the author's method of entertaining us must be beautiful, not elaborately beautiful, but at least simply beautiful.

As to truth, that is another matter. We may insist on it in our daily lives, but we are willing to waive it in fiction. Desiring romance we

give our author free rein. We like to feel that the characters and situations we are shown are plausible ones, which is merely another way of saying that we like to have our illusions maintained. If the situations and characters are not plausible, we desire our author to be artistic enough to make them seem plausible. And the task of the author is greatly simplified by the fact that nowadays we all freely admit that anything is possible.

As to the backgrounds and characters we are shown, our liking for these, too, is shaped by our individual preferences. Some of us like home backgrounds and simple, rather primitive characters. Others like foreign backgrounds and highly sophisticated characters. Some of us are fond of tales of princesses and ordinary young men. Some of us like stories of kings and queens; others want tales of bill clerks and stenographers and chauffeurs—all in “romantic” situations; a large and growing element among magazine readers demands tales of tenement life, which can be movingly beautiful in their portrayal of the struggles and ambitions of tenement dwellers. There is romance among them, in plenty; romance nicely blended with realism. And, no doubt, since the lists of so-called “best sellers” prove it, a large element demands tales by authors whose hero is too noble to wear a clean shirt, and an equally large ele-

ment demands "sex" stories, on the theory that the so-called "sex interest" is the sole interest life holds. Indeed, it would seem at present, glancing through the new novels and current magazines, that this last element is the largest of all, since it must be so widely catered to.

But whatever else these various elements may or may not demand, they want "romance" and they get it, in some degree. To that degree, therefore, every novel written is more or less a romantic novel, and it rests with the reader to find or to miss its romance by lending such imagination as he has to the author's picture. The high adventure of John Henry Jones, bill clerk, bearding his chief to demand a raise in salary, may be as thrilling to another bill clerk as a joust on the Field of the Cloth of Gold was to the participants in that joust. But neither the scene nor the bill clerk would appeal to the lady whose remarks are quoted at the beginning.

All of which brings us back to the question of what a romantic novel really is. To me it is and always has been a story of action, episode, and characterization, frankly written for the purpose of entertaining the reader and dealing preferably with types and scenes with which I was not too familiar. I do not doubt that a remarkable story could be written about the family next door, but I prefer my characters on the Inland Sea or in the American desert or

climbing the Himalayas. It does not interest me to read a description of my neighbor taking in the milk bottles in the morning. It does interest me to follow our hero's journey with a dog team over the Chilkoot Pass. Yet to the driver of the average dog team there is no more "romance" in his routine journey than my neighbor experiences in taking in the morning milk. To me there is romance because the types and settings are outside of my own world and the combination of the dog team and the driver and the Chilkoot Pass and the struggle with the elements appeals to my imagination.

One wonders why the description of the neighbor taking in the milk must be considered "realism" whereas the description of the thrilling journey of the driver and the dog team must be regarded as "romance." Is it romance because it is outside of our individual experience? So are the incidents and characters of many so-called "realistic" novels. Moreover, we know now, as I have pointed out, that the most startling incidents of the most romantic story can happen and do happen around us. Where, then, does romance begin? Not till we can answer these questions shall we know what a romantic novel really is.

Whatever it is, and however often it is downed, it always bobs up again in various forms, and its hold on most of us is lasting. We

realize this when we look back along the literary path, for the experience of the average reader is much the same. We begin, if we are born readers, by reading everything we can get hold of, and by reading it all with a vast and indiscriminating enjoyment. A little later we discover that a certain book by a certain author has especially appealed to us, and forthwith we read as many of that author's books as we can find. For an interval he furnishes us with both a standard and a preference. If he happen to be a writer of romantic tales we enter upon our first debauch of romantic novel reading.

The chances are that we eventually bring about an attack of mental indigestion which, when it has passed, leaves us in the second and hyper-critical stage of enjoyment of fiction, a stage in which we robustly refuse all but "the best," though we are still very vague as to what "the best" may be.

At this period we become the natural prey of those who brandish their art like a sword above their heads, calling to us to follow them. We humbly follow, not one but many leaders. We are instructed and stimulated and uplifted until our heads whirl. We rise to the heights with inspired leaders and, possibly, temporarily, descend into the depths with others, convinced that they are equally inspired. We feel that we must give them all their chance to pass

their message on to us. We must prove that we are bored and tolerant and—God save the mark—"modern!" Our critical faculty, if we have any, is numbed by the condition of mental chaos in which we live. We are temporarily swayed by this author or that one, by this critic or that one; we have glimpses of the sky and of the abyss.

What we get out of it all is in effect a second attack of mental indigestion, more prolonged and serious than the first. Its reaction leaves us forever past the indiscriminating enjoyment of our first years of reading, and the fiery enthusiasms of the second stage. Temporarily at least we are in quiet and agreeable side waters of the literary stream, beyond reach of its falls and treacherous undertow. Our demands are simple. We ask only for beauty and entertainment. We may not be willing to admit the demand to any but ourselves, but we see that it is supplied.

As a matter of course, we make innumerable excursions back to the main stream. We wish to know what our contemporaries are doing, and what our fellow men and fellow women are talking about, and why such and such a writer has so huge a following. We find the main stream full of surprises, swollen and turgid here, clear and beautiful there, rushing on forever to the expected and the unexpected.

But, and this is a most reassuring discovery, we also find, dotted about on it, numerous little islands of "romance."

The setting and characters of the so-called romantic novel are no longer those of the past. Why should they be, when the present period is the most interesting, the most dramatic, and thus the most "romantic" that the world has ever known? The settings of the new romances are modern settings, and the characters are modern characters. But the romances themselves are what they always have been and always will be, as old as the eternal hills, as young as the new dawn, and lending themselves to endless repetition because the eternal child in most of us incessantly continues to demand its favorite fairy tale.

THE NOVEL WITH A PURPOSE

G. K. CHESTERTON

THE question of Catholic propaganda in novels written by Catholics has been raised by Mr. Patrick Braybrook and others. The very phrase, which we are all compelled to use, is awkward and even false. A Catholic putting Catholicism into a novel, or a song, or a sonnet, or anything else, is not being a propagandist; he is simply being a Catholic.

Everybody understands this about every other enthusiasm in the world. When we say that a poet's landscape and atmosphere are full of the spirit of England, we do not mean that he is necessarily conducting an anti-German propaganda during the Great War. We mean that if he is really an English poet, his poetry cannot be anything but English. When we say that songs are full of the spirit of the sea, we do not mean that the poet is recruiting for the navy, or even trying to collect men for the merchant service. We mean that he loves the sea; and for that reason would like other people to love it.

Personally, I am all for propaganda; and a great deal of what I write is deliberately propa-

gandist. But even when it is not in the least propagandist, it will probably be full of the implications of my own religion; because that is what is meant by having religion. So the jokes of a Buddhist, if there were any, would be Buddhist jokes. So the love-songs of a Calvinistic Methodist, should they burst from him, would be Calvinistic-Methodist love-songs.

Catholics have produced more jokes and love-songs than Calvinists or Buddhists. That is because, saving their holy presence, Calvinists and Buddhists have not got so large or human a religion. But anything they did express would be steeped in any convictions that they do hold; and that is a piece of common sense which would seem to be quite self-evident; yet I foresee a vast amount of difficulty about it in the one isolated case of the Catholic Church.

To begin with, what I have said would be true of any other real religion; but so much of the modern world is full of religiosity that is rather a sort of unconscious prejudice. Buddhism is a real religion, at any rate, a real philosophy. Calvinism was a real religion, with a real theology. But the mind of the modern man is a curious mixture of decayed Calvinism and diluted Buddhism; and he expresses his philosophy without knowing that he holds it.

We say what it is natural to us to say; but we

know what we are saying; therefore it is assumed that we are saying it for effect. He says what it is natural to him to say; but he does not know what he is saying, still less why he is saying it. So he is not accused of uttering his dogma with the purpose of revealing it to the world; for he has not really revealed it to himself. He is just as partisan, he is just as particularist, he is just as much depending on one doctrinal system as distinct from another. But he has taken it for granted so often that he has forgotten what it is. So his literature does not seem to him partisan, even when it is. But our literature does seem to him propagandist, even when it is not.

Suppose I write a story, let us hope a short story, say about a wood that is haunted by evil spirits. Let us give ourselves the pleasure of supposing that at night all the branches have the appearance of being hung with hundreds of corpses, like the orchard of Louis the Eleventh, the spirits of travelers who have hanged themselves when they came to that spot; or anything bright and cheery like that.

Suppose I make my hero, Gorlias Fitzgorgon (that noble character), make the sign of the cross as he passes this spot; or the friend who represents wisdom and experience advises him to consult a priest with a view to exorcism. Making the sign of the cross seems to me not

only religiously right but artistically appropriate and psychologically probable. It is what I should do; it is what I conceive that my friend Fitzgorgon would do; it is also esthetically apt or, as they say, "in the picture."

I rather fancy it might be effective if the traveler saw with the mystical eye, as he saw the forest of dead men, a sort of shining pattern or silver tangle of crosses hovering in the dark, where so many human fingers had made that sign upon the empty air. But though I am writing what seems to me to be natural and appropriate and artistic, I know that the moment I have written it a great roar and bellow will go up with the word "Propaganda" coming from a thousand throats; and that every other critic, even if he is kind enough to commend the story, will certainly add, "But why does Mr. Chesterton drag in his Roman Catholicism?"

Now let us suppose that Mr. Chesterton has not this disgusting habit. Let us suppose that I write the same story, or the same sort of story, informed with a philosophy which is familiar and therefore unobserved. Let us suppose that I accept the ready-made assumptions of the hour, without examining them any more than others do; suppose I get into the smooth rut of newspaper routine and political catchwords; and make the man in my story act exactly like the man in the average magazine story. I

know exactly what the man in the average magazine story would do. I can almost give you his exact words. In that case Fitzgorgon, on first catching a glimpse of the crowds of swaying specters in the moon, will almost inevitably say, "But this is the twentieth century!"

In itself, of course, the remark is simply meaningless. It is far more meaningless than making the sign of the cross could ever be; for to that even its enemies attach some sort of meaning. But to answer a ghost by saying "This is the twentieth century" is in itself quite unmeaning; like seeing somebody commit a murder and then saying, "But this is the second Tuesday in August!"

Nevertheless, the magazine writer who for the thousandth time puts these words into a magazine story has an intention in his illogical phrase. He is really depending upon two dogmas, neither of which he dares to question and neither of which he is able to state. The dogmas are: first, that humanity is perpetually and permanently improving through the process of time; and, second, that improvement consists in a greater and greater indifference or incredulity about the miraculous.

Neither of these two statements can be proved; and it goes without saying that the man who uses them cannot prove them, for he cannot even state them. In so far as they are at all in

the order of things that can be proved, they are things that can be disproved. For certainly there have been historical periods of relapse and retrogression; and there certainly are highly organized and scientific civilizations very much excited about the supernatural, as people are about Spiritualism today.

But, anyhow, those two dogmas must be accepted on authority as absolutely true, before there is any sense whatever in Gorlias Fitzgorgon saying, "But this is the twentieth century." The phrase depends on the philosophy; and the philosophy is put into the story.

Yet nobody says the magazine story is propagandist, or is preaching that philosophy, because it contains that phrase. We do not say that the writer has dragged in his progressive party politics. We do not say that he is going out of his way to turn the short story into a novel with a purpose. He does not feel as if he were going out of his way; his way lies straight through the haunted wood, as does the other; and he only makes Gorlias say what seems to him a sensible thing to say; as I make him do what seems to me a sensible thing to do. We are both artists in the same sense; we are both propagandists in the same sense and non-propagandists in the same sense. The only difference is that I can defend my dogma, and he cannot even define his.

In other words, this world of today does not know that all the novels and newspapers that it reads or writes are in fact full of certain assumptions that are just as dogmatic as dogmas. With some of those assumptions I agree, such as the ideal of human equality implied in all romantic stories from "Cinderella" to "Oliver Twist," that the rich are insulting God in despising poverty. With some of them I totally disagree; as in the curious idea of human inequality, which is permitted about races though not about classes; as that "Nordic" people are so much superior to "Dagoes" that a score of Spanish desperadoes armed to the teeth are certain to flee in terror from the fist of any solitary gentleman who has learned all the military and heroic virtues in Wall Street or the Stock Exchange.

But the point about these assumptions, true or false, is that they are felt as being assumed, or alluded to, or taken naturally as they come; they are not felt as being preached; and therefore they are not called propaganda. Yet they have in practice all the double character of propaganda; they involve certain views with which everyone does not agree; and they do in fact spread those views by means of fiction and popular literature. What they do not do is to state them clearly so that they can be criticized.

I do not blame the writers for putting their

philosophy into their stories. I should not blame them even if they used their stories to spread their philosophy. But they do blame us; and the real reason is that they have not yet realized that we have a philosophy at all.

The truth is, I think, that they are caught in a sort of argument in a circle. Their vague philosophy says to them: "All religion is dead; Roman Catholicism is a religious sect which must be particularly dead, since it consists of mere external acts and attitudes, crossings, genuflections, and the rest, which these sectarians suppose they have to perform in a particular place at a particular time."

Then some Catholic will write a romance or a tragedy about the love of a man and a woman, or the rivalry of two men, or any other general human affair; and they will be astonished to find that he cannot preach these things in an "unsectarian" way. They say, "Why does he drag in his religion?" They mean: "Why does he drag in his religion which consists of crossings, genuflections and external acts belonging to a particular place and time, when we are talking about the wide world and the beauty of woman and the anger and ambition of man?"

In other words, they say: "When we have assumed that his creed is a small and dead thing, how can he apply it as a universal and living

thing? It has no right to be so broad, when we all know it is so narrow."

I conclude, therefore, that, while Mr. Braybrooke was quite right in suggesting that a novelist with a creed ought to be ashamed of having a cause, the more immediate necessity is to find some way of popularizing our whole philosophy of life by putting it more plainly than it can be put in the symbol of a story.

The difficulty with a story is in its very simplicity and especially in its swiftness. Men do things and do not define or defend them. Gorlias Fitzgorgon makes the sign of the cross: he does not stop in the middle of the demon wood to explain why it is at once an invocation of the Trinity and a memorial to the Crucifixion. What is wanted is a popular outline of the way in which ordinary affairs are affected by our view of life, and how it is also a view of death, a view of sex, a view of social decencies, and so on. If people understood the light that shines for us upon all these facts, they would no longer be surprised to find it shining no less brightly in our fiction.

CONFESSIONS ON NOVEL WRITING

C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

A VISITOR, whom none might gainsay, offered us an option: "Please write something on the theory of the novel—what the novel ought to be; or make a general confession—'why I write stories and what I think of them.'" Unable to evoke many ideas about novels, theory and ethical justification of, and far from fond of confession other than sacramental, we perched on neither stool but subsided in the ignominious dust between them.

About half way through my first grim spell of Oxford I woke up to the fact that Greeks and Romans were real people; and I began to think that I could see through their eyes what the books were presenting to me concerning them; and I thought I could feel what they felt without losing any possessions of my own that I valued. Perhaps this was all part of a general increase in human sympathy, of which, perhaps again, I might have been rather frightened until then. Anyhow, desiring to write a page or two on some pagan ceremonies, such as the Roman ghost-hunt, or the Taurobolium, I

found myself looking at these rites automatically through the eyes, for example, of a small Roman child, and of a Romanized boy, presumably because I was myself a child when I liked ghosts, and a boy when I gloated (like all boys) over horrors—gibbets, skeletons, guillotines.

So a sort of story emerged, but written by a man constantly focusing and re-focusing his eyes, so that parts of the tale seemed written from the ancient standpoint, and parts from that of an owl-eyed student, beset with examinations. In time, sufficient stories came to be written to form a small book, in which the latest written chapters, I think, "God's Orphan," were the nearest to "straight story," and the chapter "Roma Felix" went the nearest to preserving a double, simultaneous vision, that of the ancient and of the modern "see-er." Anyhow, they had jettisoned those congeries of eruditional facts, which had quite destroyed that "whole-ness" and proportion which St. Thomas requires in anything that can in how modest a way soever be called a work of "art." Yet possibly in the immature little "In God's Nursery," taken as a collection of tales, there was a sort of "whole," and a "form"—for St. Thomas also asks that in a product of art there should be a *splendor formae*: that what makes it what it is, should shine forth. Frankly, I did feel all the way

through, that the old world certainly, and indeed our modern world scarcely less, were populated with bewildered little children whom God looked after. The tiny touches of His love! The guidance, by infinitesimal degrees, towards (or back to) that Wisdom that was made flesh and pitched His tent amongst us. Yes, the merciful and tender minutiae of our Father's love—the imperceptible insinuations of His Spirit! God our *nurse*.

Some time after that, came the "urge" (forgive me) to describe some wonderful scenery I had watched in Algeria and elsewhere. But I had not been alone; different people see things differently; moods themselves give you different eyes; and altogether those places had made me, as they say, "think things." So no mere description was possible. And since I was rather laughing at myself for sentimentalizing over sunsets and so forth, I naturally wondered what a very practical and unimaginative on-looker would have made of the same evidence. And when I had made up my mind what one of the terrifying modern girls who exist in such quantities and are not least terrifying when they conjoin ruthless orthodoxy with complete practical competence, would have thought and said, it amused me to put beside her a brother in the shape of a rather neurotic, well to do, young artist, trying despite personal handicaps and the

continual challenge to impishness provided by his sister, to be good. And that naturally suggested, in contrast to these two lop-sided people, the "four-square" man, the happy perfectly controlled right-thinking, right-acting Lord-in-life. And that again, the "average" lad, of whom the world mostly consists.

Then to my surprise I found that a thesis had formed itself—that the world existed in many degrees of twilight—doubt, faith, never sheer night, never the Light of Glory. But that through those twilights, the waters of God's Spirit were always stealing or impetuously rushing. These two Old Testament metaphors were, no doubt, haunting the back of my mind all that time. (Why Old Testament? Because I had been mixing for the first time with Mohammedan Orientals, I suppose). Then the last suggestion offered itself, that this world is not "run" and perhaps cannot be, by Perfect Men; still less, just by the imaginative artist; still less, by the practical person merely; certainly not by the materialist. So, the Lord-in-Life gets taken away; the Practical Person finds that a whole new world has to be learnt; the Artist cannot drive the car himself, but inspires the Average Man to do so; and anyway the Materialist takes a back seat. Oh yes, to our surprise we discovered all that in "The Waters of Twilight."

By the time that "The Goddess of Ghosts" occurred, we were getting (sorry; I meant 'I was getting': but one does so detest—and again, how I do hate that Oxford and clergymanish 'one'—well, anyhow . . .) rather more sophisticated or at least deliberate. A line from the *Odyssey*, a schoolboy's remark, a cricket match, were quite enough as stimulus; and then the War began, and I found myself continually in contact with young Catholic officers who were experiencing their first soul torments, and young pagans who were just then having little enough but torment, even when they tried to drug the torment down by the savage pleasures of "leave."

The Catholics often began to ask themselves whether they had ever really believed—whether there had been anything in their lives but convention; and the others wondered in agony whether there might not be "something else, somehow," as even the Australian "digger" dreamed. So I wrote some chapters, all of which suggested (what is true enough) that the world is peopled with ghosts, but that there *is* a reality: "The Waters of Twilight" had been written for puzzled, lop-sided, unsatisfactory people (except the one who got killed), who never really thrive till something had kicked them into real life; the "Goddess" was meant for people who were being kicked black and

blue; and thank God, the oddest Unknowns used to write from the trenches to say it had helped them, not into a world of Fairy tale, and certainly not into the world of Dance (so to call it), but into a world where they at least realized that there was a new horizon with something real behind it. Had they been offered a textbook of apologetics, they would not have read a page of it.

I confess that the last story asked a question that I had myself been often asked: "Is a marriage possible between the Church and the modern world? And if so which of the modern worlds? Must she continue to be merely "in" the world, though certainly not of it? or must she retire, as the hermits did, right out of it, and pray for it? or can she marry if not this generation, at least the rising one? has the non-Catholic mind of today got assets on which the Faith can lay hold? The Huxley-Herbert-Spencer era, with its silly dogmas of materialist agnosticism, certainly had not; the universalist, theosophic element in our world today, has hardly more; what of the eighteen-year-olds? Have *they!*" The question still asks itself, and the answer oscillates between an enthusiastic Yes! and a hesitating hope.

The War went on, and by dint of practically living in hospitals, aerodromes and camps, I met yet other very different sorts of men in great

intimacy. Many wished for instruction. A small outline of a skeleton doctrine was drawn up, which I wished afterwards to expand, and to expand in conversation-shape so as to give more reality to the "difficulties" and so that an instructee might feel sure that he was understood and sympathized with. Hence by sheer force of nature, a sort of story came into being, scened in a hospital, where instruction was so much easier than in, for example, camps. And since the "instruction" was rightly conceived as given to an "average man," the Sergeant in "Jock, Jack and the Corporal" was simply supplied once more by the nature of things. Then, I knew a "Jock" and I knew a "Corporal" (with hair exactly like that. . . . I told him I was writing its panegyric, and his language became unprintable), and so they incarnated the extra amount of the supernatural that was needed, and the fierce yet terrified paganism that you meet—one character could not properly express such disparate sentiments as had to *be* expressed. Besides, I just liked them. . . . And when "Jock" was finished, I wanted to find out what could possibly have happened to the Corporal in the hideous times that followed the War, and I wrote "Mr. Francis Newnes," who was the Corporal in "civvies"; most people hated the book, because of its end, which to me

seemed radiantly, ecstatically happy, and in fact was.

I do not imply that there are photographs in these books, nor that I have used my friends as "copy": but many of the incidents are exact, more are but slightly adapted, and all the sentiments are real; and no one could catch up with the real loveliness, tragedy, horror, delicacy and affectionateness of the men whose lives were brought into such close contact with one's own. There has been one more "story book," "Albert Alfred, P.C." I had been getting to know colliers; and (blameless as my career had been) some policemen; and I liked them all. Then there had been some retreats in mining towns, and these always fill me with intense happiness. Moreover, I had a thesis: the ordinary man, given his chance, shows that he thinks Catholic thoughts whatever be his upper layer of headlines, catchwords, and cinema suggestion. I wanted to make some of these men show that, without ever forcing the situation or supplying them with sentiments not their own. Whether it "came off" or not, it is not mine to judge.

Probably, to one of a nationality other than that to which the men were conceived as belonging, all these books must seem sufficiently improbable, quite apart from the cockney or other dialect in which parts of them are written. What alone I would urge is, that if they are bad

(frankly, I consider parts of them to be quite bad), that is not because they have a purpose; indeed, I should hold all art to be bad which has not got a purpose; that "art for art's sake" is a remark that is perfectly meaningless; and that an artist will only be really good when he controls his instincts by a philosophy, and that some philosophies (like that of pleasure, for example) are bad, and that a work based upon such a philosophy will be bad too, and that an artist is not in the least his own master in such matters.

St. Thomas, when he did not explicitly mention "purpose" as a *sine qua non* of a work of art, did not, because he took it for granted. Any intelligent person, and he postulated plenty of intelligence in his artists, of course had to have a purpose! But, the purpose has to be in keeping with the method, which here is, writing a story which professes, at any rate, to represent "real life." So the characters and their thoughts and deeds must not be made mere diagrams, nor yet the victims of the artist's purpose, however noble. Nor need the artist make perfectly clear, even, what his characters *mean*, though he should make sufficiently clear what *he means*, for the characters may be people not clear themselves, and so their thoughts and words will be confused. Yet again, the sheer development of the characters and the story they occasion,

may reveal many things to the artist that he never suspected when he began to write! Certainly from the finished story, he may to his bewilderment perceive a unity, a proportion, a harmony, a "form," that far outpass any explicit intention he had when he began it.

I should like—unpractical desire, I shall say—to write an enormous novel, in about five volumes of five books each, tracing the concrete psychology of the Greek world from about 1500 B.C. to zero; mating it with the concrete expression of Jewish psychology similarly traced; developing the progeny of this family within the Roman Empire; splitting it, and keeping one-half Latin, in Gaul, and Teutonizing the other half by the Rhine, or the Danube, and then remating them in the persons of the descendant of a French émigré and the modern Englishman, who, by that time, the offspring of the northern lot would have become. And that is my confession of an absurd idea for a novel.

THE TRUE BOOK OF ADVENTURE

EDITH O'SHAUGHNESSY

LONG since I have divided books into two classes, those which stir and release the mind, those which leave it bound and flat. Needless to say nine-tenths of our reading leaves it in this latter state. What is the quality in a book that does awaken and release the mind, refreshing it, stimulating it, sending it forth on long journeys? It is not interest in plot, suspense; it is not even the romantic quality, as in the great love stories, the great sea stories. It is something else; the least complex book may possess it and in its possession become immortal. It is, it seems to me, quite simply the suggestion of things eternal, invisible, lying just behind those mortal and visible.

The true adventures of man have always been the interior adventures, whatever the changing and extraordinary forms of outward life in the cycle of the centuries. The man in an automobile or in an airplane has them as well as the pilgrim with scrip and staff—though doubtless not so often. Every age has left records of such adventures. They may or may not be set in

the frame of strange physical happenings, but they contain always the implication of some essential quality of a man's soul—persecution and resistance for an idea's sake, the giving up of life that another may live, the tenacity or illusion of his love, his courage in face of difficulties, whatever, in sum, *truly* stirs this mortal frame on its journey to its last end. A man may encircle the globe a dozen times without awakening even the passing interest of his contemporaries, much less leaving an impression on posterity. Certainly, the oftener a man loves, the less interesting becomes the record of his love. Similarly a man may commit six murders and awaken little comment, but some inner attitude of the sinner to his sins, caught in a book, may claim it through successive generations.

So it remains the interior concern of the voyager to his voyage, of the lover to his love, of the sinner to his sins that counts, and thrilling as may be the tales of bodily shipwreck and rescue, those implicating the shipwreck and rescue of the soul will always surpass them in interest. Whoever has fixed these in written words can in some sense be sure of literary longevity, sometimes even of immortality. And literary immortality is no small thing, whatever may be one's attitude towards posterity.

I was asked the other day concerning the de-

sirability of stressing the Catholic note in fiction. I must confess that my own tendency is not to stress it, but to follow out the old French adage *glissez, n'appuyez jamais*. The fact that the writer is Catholic will inevitably reveal itself in his attitude towards one or another fundamental, such as religious vocation, love and marriage, divorce, the family, or even the ubiquitous matter of Prohibition.

In the same sense I am not sure that I like the expression "Catholic writer"—a writer who is Catholic, yes, but why segregate our writings from the great outlying world when by gaining access to it we may reveal the jewel we carry in our breast?

Letters and faith do not necessarily go hand in hand, though ideally speaking those having the treasures of the Church to draw upon, her splendid imageries, her dazzling liturgy, her stranger-than-fiction lives of the saints, should be possessed of greater riches than those not having access to the spilled-out, over-flowing beauties of the Church. But it is not so. Good intentions however desirable in morals are nil in art, so faith without artistic form is nil in the mortal matter of letters. The practices of the mind are not necessarily akin to the hopes of the soul. If this were so, life, instead of being a pilgrimage, would be a sojourn in a vast garden of delight and death would be less welcome

than it is. One might as easily speak of Catholic musicians, sculptors, painters, mathematicians, but one does not. Algebra is as accessible to the infidel as to the believer. These things imply exercise of earthly talents and are distinct from the mystical working of the being, from the true end of man which is the salvation, in plain English, of that somewhat unfashionable, certainly much neglected part of him, his soul.

However lurid may be the account of what he does, there is inevitably a dreadful monotony about it, whereas the portrayal of what he *is*, and will forever be, necessitates subtleties and variations of treatment that only those who are masters of the written word and searchers of the human heart can achieve. The vessel and what it contains are forever two, just as the action and its intent are two.

A certain bishop of a Protestant church in a recent burst of enthusiasm for the rich sitters in his pews, announced quite solemnly that God takes as much pleasure in a good polo game as in a beautiful cathedral. Maybe—but probably *not*. I think the worthy divine befogged the issues. While I am sure that among polo players anywhere and everywhere there are those desirous of the salvation of their souls, I think the ancient game itself is scarcely a matter

for comparison to the temples of God. One concerns time alone, the other its rival, eternity.

Another Gordian-knotted question confronting us is the presentment of vice in fiction as well as virtue—the to be or not to be? For one misguided moment, in indignation at the slimy superficiality and worse of the newspapers, books and periodicals offered everywhere as the staple mental nourishment of youth and age, served as conveniently, cheaply and quickly as food on any lunch counter and often taken standing, I thought that the *Christian Science Monitor* was perhaps following out a good idea in not recounting the sins and mishaps of mortals, the extraordinary, often fatal, antics they go through trying to get everything they want and be happy too. But second thought showed the essential poverty of the idea. Riper civilizations reproach America, and doubtless justly, with her general Pollyanna attitude towards life, her attempts to do away with suffering, to hide sin.

I saw the other day a quotation from John Masefield to the effect that “the vision of agony or spiritual contest pushed beyond the limits of the dying personality is exalting and cleansing and that it is only by such vision that a multitude can be brought to the passionate knowledge of things uplifting and eternal.” He goes on to say that “tragedy at its best is a vision of the heart of life.” And who would not have a

vision of the heart of life, no matter what the price, and then put it in a book, an immortal book? We Catholics feel, nay we know, that suffering, the way of the Cross, is the easiest way to God; it would seem, as well, the easiest way to art. However, all this, as so many personal discoveries that cause astonishment to explorers outside the Church, is to us the simplest daily truth of Catholic living. There is no *mare ignotum* about it. I have seen many a wondering de Soto standing before his just-discovered Pacific Ocean—which to Catholics is like a pond.

Clearly it is not by avoiding the mention of sin and suffering that we do away with them, and I think I incline to an unequivocal presentment of sin in its relation to individual destiny; and by this I do not mean the hypocritical suggestiveness that is the stock in trade of so many women's magazines, but outlined boldly, painted in strong colors, with the full price labelled and few bargains—though of these last life seems to present quite a disconcerting assortment. In many stories nowadays it is difficult to distinguish vice from its lovely opposite, virtue, for the first is continually borrowing the latter's clothes, and wearing them often, one must admit, most becomingly.

The other day in buying books to send to the steamer, I saw the attractive title "All the Sad

Young Men" and thought, "just the thing for the *jeune fille* of the party." I dipped into it that evening and found it impossible to give. Doubtless the young girl is familiar with all that is in it; it was not so much the sex-antics and sex-implications, in which it abounds, as the way they are presented; something raw, cloddy, heavy, no more inspiring than a trip to a butcher shop where dead meats are quartered, halved and chopped, the few green sprigs stuck about helping very little if at all. No hint of the "glory and the dream," of those invisible things behind the visible. One of the reviewers of Scott Fitzgerald's book said somewhat confidently that he had "turned a corner." He may have, but I fear me it is a wrong corner and likely to lead him into one of the many blind alleys awaiting unwary writers of books and whence there is rarely an escape. Sadly one sees a real talent occupying itself alone with the visible, for truly "things that are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Let a book but give a single hint of things unseen, snare but a single suggestion of things eternal and it is a long-lived book, perhaps not a best seller, but a long liver and likely to be kept on the bookshelves of the world. It is to the discredit of countless books of piety that they are empty of all true adventure. It implies

some measure of talent to be able to suggest the unseen—that hoped-for, that eternally-desired—and books discoursing on the interests of the soul can be duller than the proverbial ditch-water—and I dislike a dull book of piety as much as anybody.

That there are two spirits on earth, one of good, another of evil, is allowed by believer and unbeliever alike. I see no advantage in not recognizing them and calling them by name. The spectacle of virtue doing the Charleston with vice through 350 pages, their forms as intermingled and confused as in that latest contortion, seems quite as useless as it is offensive. This is all doubtless a natural outcome of the sloppy, uninformed mass-thinking that prevails the length and breadth of the land, and I have come in desperation to prefer certain lustier presentments of the wages of sin, for the moment out of fashion, where the devil in full paraphernalia, hoofs, horns and fork, quite openly builds his fire and jabs in unwary ones, to the current cold storage presentments, where vice keeps as long as virtue, and neither has any taste.

Turning to the Book of Books for illustration we find in the story of the Prodigal Son—the greatest of all short stories—that the wanderings and sins of the beloved son are as explicit as the joy of his return to his father's arms and the repentance of his poor heart. Though none

can rise to the heights of this story, it is there as an eternal model; in it the spirits of good and evil are as plain as day and night, and the interior adventure is as evident as the physical. It could be stretched to any number of volumes without losing in depth and richness, so gorgeous is the life-material that composes it, so subtle are its implications, so perfect its art, so satisfying its conclusions.

But it is not alone to spiritual writers, as typified by the Bible, the Fathers of the Church, the Saints, that one may go for the suggestion of things eternal and invisible behind those mortal and visible of which I spoke in the beginning. "The Trial and Death of Socrates" is such a book. He cried out that "an unexamined life is the greatest of misfortunes." His awareness of his soul was complete, a marvelous gift of perception, and almost in our Catholic sense. Not long ago in great personal grief it was the first book—not of Revelation—that I could read. There indeed is one of the greatest of interior adventures, which while it involved the death of the body, concerned first of all the life of the soul. No one remembers a man just because he has lived and died with billions of others, and those whose written word concerns only the life and death of the body will see it as quickly delivered to oblivion as a handful of sand into the ocean.

COOPER AND STORIES OF THE SEA

JAMES B. CONNOLLY

OF the last century Americans who wrote of the sea, only the books of four—Cooper, Dana, Melville, Nordhoff—are to be found in our libraries today. Of these four, Cooper was the novelist.

The only novelist, Cooper was also the one American of the nineteenth century who wrote as if he had a sailor's soul. Others wrote of a ship and things happening aboard her without seeming to be aware that she was out to sea, and not tied up to a dock ashore.

A writer insensitive to the moods of the sea gives us forty pages of a wild storm and a ship in the middle of it, and yet we not once feel the ship heaving off a level keel. He gives us a ship with sails which belly roundly, pennants which stream out stiffly; a ship with all the usual furniture—sails, masts, ropes, poop, cabin, fo'c's'le; he tries to sail her but she remains a log upon the water.

Cooper had a feeling for the sea, and his contemporaries did not have it; or, to state it more exactly, if the others had a feeling for the sea

they failed to make the reader share it with them. I can still recall, from so long ago that I am not certain of the name of the story, Cooper's picture of the hero in his little ship watching the sails and hull of the great English man-o'-war lifting above the horizon. Dawn is stealing over the yet darkened waters; the white sails loom above the somber horizon; the cuppered lower planks flash in the new-risen sun; up she heaves and down she rolls, the lofty frigate; and onward to the hero's little craft she comes before the freshening breeze.

The foregoing are not Cooper's own words. I have forgotten his words, but to this day the memory of that picture is with me, and only a man who sensed the moods of the sea and the ways of a ship upon the sea could have evoked so vivid a scene in a little boy's mind.

Cooper's literary reputation had never been safe from the raiders. Mark Twain sallied forth one time, selecting for his point of attack a scene in one of Cooper's land stories. Curious how the wise old Mark got so excited over a wrong detail or two among a hundred details of an otherwise enjoyable story! He had written *finis* under his name as a creative writer, and was going in for publicity; whether he had an honest wrath against Cooper or whether he was being made use of by the people who bore no love for what Cooper stood for, is open to argu-

ment. Later, Mark composed his "Belgian Congo Atrocities," and in good time he was given his honorary degree by Oxford, which was equivalent to passing the word to all the Empire broadcasters that here was one who deserved well of them.

Cooper stood for robust Americanism. In his day, even as now, the United States was overrun with men who were at once proclaiming their American citizenship and regretting the Revolution. Cooper, who with Poe, had been hailed as the best in America by the best in Europe, could have done very well for himself by riding with what then, as now, was a powerful tide of propaganda in this country; but he preferred free sailing, as did Melville later. Richard Henry Dana was more amenable and because he was so, our school children are being taught to read Dana and not Cooper or Melville.

Cooper did not hate the English; he hated no people under the sun, but he was strong for a free people; when French royalist writers once attacked Republican institutions, Cooper was the American author who came back at them. No anglomaniac could have asked for a more sympathetic portrait than Cooper drew in "The Two Admirals" of Sir Gervaise Oakes leading the English fleet into line of battle against the French. What Cooper did hate was the never-

ceasing English sapping and mining of our political institutions.

No admirer of Cooper will deny his faults. In "The Pilot" he moors his American frigate in a little bay on the English coast in war time for no other reason, this reader can see, than to give himself a chance to show his seamanship later in getting her out. By and by he takes her out, she clawing her desperate course past shoals and ledges, bucking the gale and the swift tide; and when he does we forgive him the staging for the chapter he makes of it.

Take in that same "Pilot," which has been held up as his best sea tale: with haughty mien and folded arms, the Pilot paces the ship's deck. Gloomy, mysterious, talking (when he does deign to talk) in the most toplofty fashion—we wish somebody with rank enough to dare it would step up and whisper in his ear: "In the Lord's name, will you come down off the poop and act like a human being?" This lordly person is not named, but he is supposed to be John Paul Jones himself. Now that redoubtable adventurer may have been just such a poseur in real life, but it is not easy to believe it; the man who had brains enough to raise himself in a few years from a fo'c's'le to an admiral's quarter deck, could hardly have taken himself so seriously.

However, in that same tale we have Tom Cof-

fin, the man-o'-warsman who was once a whaler, and who walks around with a harpoon in his fist. When Tom comes on morning watch we forget all about any previous stagy hero. Tom Coffin—Long Tom—out to sea, and Natty Bumppo—Hawkeye—ashore: in these two characters we have the proof that Cooper had a high creative faculty. They both got off windy speeches at times, but that breath of love which is the essence of high creation went into their fashioning.

Cooper had his faults: a blunt, blue pencil would not have done a bit of harm to the lengthy dialogue of many of his men; and as for his females—as he calls them—hands up for them! The most careless paragraphs of some of his heroines read like rhetorical exercises from some high-school girl's examination papers. His spirit might here reply that such was the literary fashion of his age: let a heroine of that day talk like any young woman you were likely to meet anywhere at any time, and the circulating libraries would certainly maroon her on some faraway literary isle; besides, he was a sailing master, not a ship designer. Give him a ship, any model, and he would make her go: he took book models as he found them in his day and made them go along too.

Authors of boudoir volumes (the qualifying word being meant to connote not only an intimate entourage, but also delicate tones and man-

ners to match) have accused Cooper of roaring aloud; also of melodramatic tendencies. Well, he probably did roar, as did Homer and Shakespeare and a few more classic champions when the situation demanded; and more than one of them tuned in frequently to the melodramatic wave lengths. The supreme story tellers have always delighted in what the pink boudoir-boys term melodrama; and doubtless they always will. The demnition trouble is that the sort of people who have been perpetuating mankind are the same sort who want to read about the emotional clashings of full-blooded men and women; and that being so, where is the use in getting angry about it?

We are told that Cooper had no style, by which must be meant that he never expended three days in polishing a single phrase and three hours in hunting through thesauruses and volumes of synonyms and antonyms for the precious word. He certainly was not that kind of a stylist, for which most of us who have studied the stylists as part of our profession are giving thanks. When we get through reading a story by Cooper we are not so taken up with the polish of his style that all we retain a memory of is the polish.

Cooper has a style, the style of an imaginative, vigorous and keenly observing man talking easily and naturally, the eternal style of the great

story teller; and the man who would be a story teller will come pretty near writing as he talks—or die with his professional clackers.

Cooper goes in for fine writing. When he does, we wait for him to get over it, even as we wait for some lovable friend to get over a spree. It is foolish of him, he should have known better, how did he ever come to do it, we murmur; but there he is and what can we do except wait for him to get over it and pray that he will not do it again; or, if he must, that he will not do it again in a hurry. There are some men we cannot get angry with. One of those little stylists will split an infinitive and we want to beat him; which is a proper feeling, for in the little man's own code a split infinitive is a felony; but we want to beat the head off anybody who will not make allowances for Cooper. There is in us, while a virile impulse remains, an instinct which warns us what makes for and what makes against the preservation of mankind. That instinct is for Cooper.

Cooper at his best is highly creative; best or worst he is wholesome, manly. That manliness is one of the things we fight for in him. He might appear a "rough neck" in the scented chambers of the boudoir school; his wide-stepping feet might send him tripping over the embroidered floor cushions; his shoulders would certainly displace every antimacassar he leaned

against, and in agony of trying to get air enough for his sea-going lungs, he would also surely breathe over-loudly; and yet he would probably remain the one gentleman in such a company.

He required a world of air and space to live and maneuver in; but give him that, give him his open sea and his fresh breeze of wind, and he will take you bowling along. He comes down to us as the supreme English-speaking sea novelist of the nineteenth century.

WRITING FICTION FOR BOYS

WILLIAM HEYLIGER

AT the time when Walter P. McGuire was editor of the *American Boy* magazine, he was one day on his way to a conference with one of his authors. His seat-companion on the train was a boy, and the boy's nose was buried in a book. Presently the lad came to the end, and sighed with satisfaction, and closed the volume.

"Good story?" Mr. McGuire asked.

"You bet."

"What is it about?"

"About a trapper, and he fought a bear. Gosh! it was a great fight. It's a great book."

There were many other incidents in the tale, but the boy had instinctively picked out the bear fight as the high light. He was voicing the fact that youth demands action in its fiction. The demand for "something doing" is the creed of juvenile literature. It is also its tragedy. For the vast majority of those who write for boys seem to believe that there is only one kind of action—physical action. They know only one form of motion—the motion of bodies. Hazard, to them, is always written in terms of danger to human life—chance, pursuit and trial.

They do not appear to realize that the greatest conflict is that which takes place in an uncertain, puzzled, stumbling mind.

And so, year by year, we are swamped in a sea of boys' books of adventure. It is impossible to raise a general outcry against his type of yarn. Stevenson showed in "Treasure Island" to what heights it can rise, and "Huckleberry Finn" caught the magic and the color and the fear of a mighty river. Nevertheless, the story of adventure ever runs to a certain standardized form and it is only genius that can save it from disaster. The moment Stevenson took his characters away from the Admiral Benbow Inn, something of the first charm was lost; and Huck Finn began to wear thin in those latter chapters that, to me, have always seemed to be excess baggage. Both books live on something more substantial than their tension, the one because of the beauty of its literary flavor, the other because it caught and reflected in its atmosphere the idiom and earthly spice of an uncouth period when life along the Mississippi was still young and raw.

The adventure books that inundate us today lack the Mark Twain spark of life, the Stevenson flair for beauty of style. Their purpose is but to harness the blast and the roar of rapid-fire, continuous action. They achieve it. The heroes are whirled breathlessly from one sus-

pense to another, impossible persons who do improbable deeds in improbable ways. These books lack balance. They are tornadoes of thrill. You cannot balance a tornado; you can only hope that it will not cut too wide a swath.

Real literature must be touched with a contemplative quality. Like life, it must have its moments of retrospection. Like life, too, it must have its quiet periods, its harmonies, its evenings by the fireside, if only to serve as heightening contrast to those hectic passages when all is touch and go. But you cannot expect to find a calm contemplation or a weighing of values in a madhouse. Stevenson gave us adventure plus. The plus is always the saving grace. You do not find it in these writers of prolific and vicarious adventure of whom I complain. They pitch their productions in a set, unwavering key. Action is the head, the body and the tail. Somehow, the process always reminds me of the bang and the clamor of an industrious boiler factory.

To some extent you cannot censure these men for following in their work the lines of least resistance. So many paths open to the writer of adult fiction are closed to them. They cannot do the slow, methodical, minute unfolding of character that makes a Conrad; boys would find such writing dreary. The love story is barred because up to a certain age the normal boy will hoot any show of affection between lad and lass.

The novel that sets out to make all else contributory to the complete atmosphere moves too slowly for eager young minds. So the writer of books for boys turns to adventure as the easiest way out. What else is there for him to write about?

Well, there are the problems of boyhood.

If it strikes you as humorous I am sorry for you. You don't know the adolescent mind. His problems may be laughable to you; to him they are of terrible gravity. He lives in a world of his own, and it is a world that has its own code, its own standards, its own conceptions. It is not your world but it is none the less real. And we have had surprisingly few books that try to interpret the things of that vague age that lies between boyhood and manhood.

Why this is so is something that I cannot understand. Is there anything more intriguing to the person who wishes to tinker with plot than the conflict that goes on in the human soul? But one trouble with this form of story for boys is that you cannot take liberties. You must know boys and how their minds work. You must know the Town of Boyhood, its streets, and its lanes, and its alleys. For the denizens of that town have found you out the moment you begin to produce the boy that isn't. They know when you have your gun on the target and they know when you're firing blanks.

Do you think that I am creating a mythical, glorified boy of amazingly true discernment? Men who have kept close to him tell me that he is stirred deeply by the story, told with sincerity and feeling, that touches something of his own experiences. I have found this echoed in the manner in which he has responded to two of my own books.

A boy, all at sea on the question of whether to go to work or to stay on at school, wrote to me for advice. Out of that letter, and another that came from a magazine editor, grew the book, "High Benton." This book was built around the conflict that so many thousands of boys must fight each year—school or work? It seems, on its face, a poor subject for the fictionist. Yet, within two months after that story had finished its serial publication, letters came to me from 1,067 boys who said that the tale had induced them to remain at school or to go back to school. Two of these correspondents had been out of school three years. And every letter said, in substance, "in Steve Benton I saw myself and my own problems."

Sometime later, a man who is the scoutmaster of a troupe of Boy Scouts said to me: "I cannot understand fathers. I take my scouts out on overnight hikes, and not a single father has come around to discover the type of man to whom he is entrusting his son." Out of that

chance observation grew the book, "Quimby and Son." Here was a story dealing with the relationship between father and son in those dangerous years when the boy begins to feel himself a man and the father still looks upon him as a boy. I know that the story struck home because of the letters that came to my desk. The testimony did not come exclusively from the boys; some of it came from the fathers.

We have been giving the boy, in the main, a machine-made book, sawed and measured and hammered together. And the pity of it all is that he has such a fine sense of perception, such a freshness of reception, so much of seriousness, such a depth of emotion to bestow upon that which is worth while! We have given him, mostly, books that are akin in their poverty of ideas to adult fiction. He deserves better, for his entire being is fresh and responsive. His life is at the dawn. However much he may pose a public stoicism, alone with his book he is himself—far more serious than we deem him, with depths of feeling that all too few of us ever probe. His surrender to an author who can reach him is complete and entire. The average adult reads to forget; the boy reads to remember. Whenever a boy writes to me to tell me how much he has enjoyed some story, invariably he speaks of some emotional scene that touched him

deeply. The adventure story merely plays on his overwrought nerves.

Boys' books have been cursed by being called "juveniles." You can't write down to a boy; you've done a job if you can write up to him. He wants a tale that presents to him a cross-section of his own vital problems—books that carry the romance of life and yet hold fast to the actualities. That means that these books must bring a touch of glory to the commonplace. After all, life is largely commonplace.

We must get away from the "juvenile" thought. It probably applied in the times when almost every boy's book was a moralizing tract; but today's boy lives in an era of steam and airships, moving pictures and wireless. He is keener, less unsophisticated (though this is not a virtue), and better educated. He is coming along. He wants a hero matched in possibilities to himself, and not a prodigy or a caricature. He wants a book that will have, within limitations, the forms and depth of the adult novel. He wants characterization, and not merely the names of characters.

Will he get them? Of course. It is inevitable. Youth always gets its gold if the gold it asks be bright with truth.

THE BOY AND THE STORY

FRANCIS J. FINN, S.J.

IT was considered a misfortune in my family that, at about the age at which a child is supposed to come to the use of reason, I was stricken with malaria—a prevalent disease in St. Louis in the early sixties. This attack ranked me as a delicate child, and, in consequence, I was treated and humored as an invalid. Having just learned to read, and being, in the circumstances, something of a shut-in, my natural inclination for reading was strengthened. If my mother wished to fill my heart with joy, she would get me a child's story book. I remember well the day—nearly sixty years ago, when she brought me home a peony-red volume, Father Faber's "Tales of the Angels." The book had an uplifting effect on me. In fact, I looked favorably upon the prospect of becoming an angel, being quite willing to die in order to achieve that laudable desire. However, on becoming seriously ill, and being asked whether I was willing to go to Heaven and be an angel, I replied, with becoming modesty, that this world was good enough for me.

It was hard upon this event, if my memories

serve me right, that there came to me a windfall. A good widow, who had lived in our family for years, and who, being my nurse, had trained me during the Civil War to be a rebel (although the rest of the family were Unionists), became dangerously ill and made her will. She had some six or seven cherished volumes, and these she presented to me out of hand. Among these books was "Fabiola." A great impression was made upon my elders by the fact that I read this book, at the age of seven or eight, with enthusiasm. They considered me unusually clever. They detected sparks of genius, and looked forward to the time when I should go to high school, and cover myself with glory. The years that followed, I am bound to say, completely dispelled that illusion. "Fabiola" had a profound influence upon me. Tarcisius, St. Agnes, St. Cecilia and St. Sebastian became my childish ideals. I cannot say that they had a deep influence on my life, but I do know that they effected something worth while.

My taste for reading received an impetus and a certain direction in these days through a casual remark. I remember, one day, my grandfather walking into the room with the last volume of "Dombey and Son" in his hands. He had just finished it, and he remarked, "This is the finest book I ever read in all my life." Now, I was a very young boy, and he, in my estimation,

was an unbelievably old man. He must have read thousands and thousands of books, I reflected; and here, at his tremendous age, he deliberately announced that "Dombey and Son" was the finest book he had ever read. I looked forward to reading "Dombey and Son" from that moment.

However, I did not carry out my intention at once. There were Indian stories; there was "Jack Harkaway," by Bracebridge Hemming; there were Alger and Optic and Castleman; there was *Frank Leslie's Boys' Weekly*. I read intensely at that time—a gift I have long since lost. Noise, conversation, music—even rioting, I dare say, could not disturb me when I was engaged in following out the adventures of any hero of fiction. Many boys, by the way, in their early years, have that wondrous gift of concentration. In later years I have been present on many an occasion where a number of little lads, in various parts of a playroom, would, in the midst of pandemonium, read by the hour, utterly oblivious of the noise and tumult about them. On the other hand, this is not true of girls or young women. They seem to be unable to read, when there is a chance for conversation.

In consequence of my taste for reading, I had no time for play or exercise. My idea of a perfect day was to get up, eat breakfast and read till dinner; take dinner, and read till supper;

and after supper, to read till my mother insisted on my turning out the gas. Also in these days—that is before I was ten years of age, I wrote my first novel. It was an Indian story, with a block house, and wild savages besieging it. I must have written about fifty pages of this. There was only one man in the world who could read my manuscript, and he was my uncle, who, having been a printer from his early youth, could, as he said, read the manuscript of a Philadelphia lawyer. Every week, the family would assemble in the evening, and he would, with great gusto, read such manuscript as I had written. I, too, sat in the delighted circle, and was quite proud of my work, and the appreciation which it evoked, although I could not at all understand how humorous my writings were. The frequent and hearty laughs of the assembled elders rather puzzled me. I did not know that I was an unconscious humorist. The composition of this story, which I must confess I never finished, gave me great prestige in the family. More eagerly than ever they looked forward to my sweeping all the prizes when I went to high school. And to a preparatory school I went, at the age of ten, being assigned a place in the lowest class.

Well, I took no prizes, I carried off no honors, and I believe that I gave my teachers the idea that I was anything but a bright child. In fact,

some of them considered me dull. This would not have disturbed me in the least, had it not been for the reaction it produced upon my father. He was furious and put a ban on reading. At one time I was limited to an hour a day. This was the greatest trial of my early youth; however, I redeemed myself partially on February 22, Washington's birthday, when, at a public entertainment, I received the first premium for Christian Doctrine. From that time, I was allowed to read, and about that time I took up "Nicholas Nickleby."

There were no prizes for me after that. As a student, I lived in no man's land until I reached the class of Poetry, where, to do myself justice, I achieved a little prominence. All my years of reading Dickens, Cooper, Irving, Prescott, Macaulay and other good writers, culminated in my achieving distinction in English Composition and Rhetoric. By the time I had reached Poetry class, I had read "Nicholas Nickleby" and "Pickwick Papers" eight or nine times, and knew more about "David Copperfield," "Dombey and Son," "Oliver Twist," "Old Curiosity Shop" and "Little Dorritt" than I do today. I was steeped in Dickens.

When I entered the Society of Jesus, admitted, I believe, against the Provincial's better judgment, I carried with me an intimate consciousness from the joys of romance of the power

which the noble characters of fiction could exercise upon the young reader, and when upon one occasion I remarked casually to a group of novices that I hoped one day to write books, they were all properly scandalized. This ambition in my early days as a Jesuit never quite left me. However, my duties as a novice, and as a prefect and teacher in boarding college, held that ambition in abeyance.

One of my duties was to supply the boys with reading for the refectory. I found it difficult to procure them fiction which would at once interest and elevate. There were few Catholic books of the kind I desired. It was then the thought came to me that it would be a fine thing to take Catholic boys, as I found them—American boys with Catholic training—and put them into stories. Two years later, after I had been advised by the best critic of my acquaintance, never to think of writing for publication, I was presiding during a competition in the Third Humanities classroom of St. Mary's College, Kansas. There were some unusually nice boys in that class. How finely, I thought, they would fit into a book. Forthwith, putting pencil to paper, I started the first chapter of the story now known as "Tom Playfair." I wrote quickly in those days, more quickly than today, when I can easily write a thousand words an hour, and before these boys left the classroom

I read them the first chapter. They were delighted beyond measure, and I was inspired to go on. I did.

Suffering from insomnia at that time, and from a very weak back, which made sitting or standing uncomfortable, I wrote each night from ten o' clock to twelve in bed. In two months' time, I was the owner of a bulky manuscript, made up of scattered episodes concerning Tom Playfair, and his boy friends and enemies. It was not intended for publication. Seven or eight years passed before, greatly altered, it appeared in book form. It had been my hope in publishing "Tom Playfair," to give the American Catholic small boy the kind of hero he would like, and strive to imitate. Boys, I maintain, are idealists. Let them be presented with the sort of a character that appeals to them, and their love will easily reach the highest stage.

To illustrate what I mean, let me set down a conversation I had with a small boy in Detroit about three years ago. He was a wonderful soprano, and had just sung to me, accompanied at the piano by his music teacher, Father McGeary, several solos. I had heard that many of the Father's little singers in Detroit had read "Mother Machree." I asked the young soprano whether he had read it. The change in his face was striking. His eyes lighted. "Yes," he said eagerly. "And would you like to be like

the little boy, the hero of the story?" I asked. His enthusiasm became more pronounced. "I should say I would," he replied. "And," I continued, "would you like to have everything happen to you that happened to him?" Now, the readers of "Mother Machree" will remember that the child hero was killed in an automobile accident, and yet this little soprano answered simply and enthusiastically. "Yes." Now when a writer can present a boy hero in such a way that the youthful reader wants to be like him, not only in success, but in failure and disaster and in death, he has achieved the highest purpose of a writer. Father Scott has done this, and I daresay others of us, writing for American Catholic boys, have achieved the same notable success. There are priests and Religious throughout the country who owe their vocations to the reading of Catholic books for Catholic boys, written by such authors as Fathers Copus, Spalding, Boyton, Holland, Gross, Conroy, McGrath, and Mrs. Waggaman and others.

The boy is pliable; he is easily moved; he has the generous enthusiasm of youth; his reactions are not dulled, as is the case with his elders. In books, as in education, our motto should be "Catch them young."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agnes Repplier :

Books and Men	Compromises
Points of View	In Our Convent Days
Essays in Miniature	A Happy Half Century
Essays in Idleness	Americans and Others
In the Dozy Hours	Counter Currents
Varia	Points of Friction
Philadelphia, the Place	Under Dispute
and the People	The Promise of the Bell
The Fireside Sphinx	Pere Marquette

Hilaire Belloc :

Danton	First and Last
Robespierre	This and That
Marie Antoinette	Cruise of the Nona
The Girondin	Roads
The Last Days of the	Path to Rome
French Monarchy	The Old Road
History of England (4	Hills and the Sea
Vol.)	The River of London
Europe and the Faith	Mr. Burden
On	The Four Men
On Nothing	The Green Overcoat
On Everything	The Servile State
On Anything	The Mercy of Allah
On Something	Economics for Helen

Stane Street
 Sonnets and Verse
 The Contrast
 Mr. Petre
 Napoleon's Campaign of
 1812
 Short Talks with the
 Dead and Other Essays
 Miniatures of French
 History
 The Emerald
 The Catholic Church and
 History
 Cautionary Tales

A Companion to H. G.
 Wells' "Outline of His-
 tory"
 Mr. Belloc Still Objects
 The Haunted House
 How the Reformation
 Happened
 The Bad Child's Book of
 Beasts
 More Beasts for Worse
 Children
 Canterbury Tales for
 Children

Kathleen Norris:

Mother
 The Rich Mrs. Burgoyne
 Poor Dear Margaret
 Kirby
 Saturday's Child
 The Story of Julia Page
 The Heart of Rachel
 Martie, the Unconquered
 Undertow
 Josslyn's Wife
 Sisters
 Harriet and the Piper
 Beloved Woman

Certain People of Im-
 portance
 Butterfly
 The Callahans and the
 Murphys
 Noon
 Rose of the World
 Little Ships
 The Black Flemings
 Hildegarde
 Barberry Bush
 The Foolish Virgin

Ronald Knox:

Some Loose Stones
 Reunion All Round
 A Spiritual Aeneid
 Meditations on the
 Psalms
 The Belief of Catholics

The Beginning and End
 of Man
 Memories of the Future
 Sanctions
 The Viaduct Murder
 The Three Taps

René Bazin:

Stéphanette
 Ma tante Giron
 Une tache d'encre
 Mme. Corentine
 La Sarcelle Bleue
 Les Noëllet
 De toute son âme
 La Terre qui meurt
 Les Oberlé
 L'Ame alsacienne
 Humble amour
 Paul Henry, enseigne de
 vaisseau
 Contes de bonne Perrette
 Histoire de 24 sonnettes
 Le Guide de l'Empereur
 Récits de la plaine et de
 la montagne
 Mémoires d'une vieille
 fille

L'Isôlee
 Le Blé qui lève
 Le Mariage de Made-
 moiselle Gimel,
 dactylographe
 La Barrière
 La Douce France
 Davidée Birot
 Gingolph l'abandonné
 La Closerie de Champdo-
 lent
 Les Nouveaux Oberlé
 Récits du temps de la
 guerre
 Aujourd'hui et demain
 Pages religieuses
 Le Père de Foucauld
 Il était quatre petits en-
 fants
 Le Conte du triolet

Montgomery Carmichael:

In Tuscany

The Major-General

The Lady Poverty

John William Walshe

The Solitaries of Sambuca

Christopher and Cressida

Enid Dinnis:

God's Fairy Tales

Mystics All

Mr. Coleman, Gent.

Once Upon Eternity

Anchorhold

More Mystics

True Devotion to the Passion

The Three Roses

Emily Hickey

The Road to Somewhere

Emile Baumann:

Job le prédestiné

Le Fer sur l'enclume

La Paix du septième jour

Le Baptême de Pauline

Ardel

Trois villes saintes

La Fosse aux lions

L'Immolé

Le Signe sur les mains

Saint Paul

Compton Mackenzie:

Poems

The Passionate Elopement

Carnival

Kensington Rhymes

Sinister Street

Guy and Pauline

Sylvia Scarlett

Sylvia and Michael

Poor Relations

The Vanity Girl

Rich Relatives

The Seven Ages of Woman

The Altar Steps

The Parson's Progress

The Heavenly Ladder
Santa Claus in Summer

The Old Men of the Sea
Coral

Henry Bordeaux :

Le Pays natal
Le Lac noir
L'Ecran brisé
Paysages romanesques
Les Roquevillard
Les Yeux qui s'ouvrent
La Croisée des chemins
La Neige sur les pas
La Résurrection de la
 chair
La Chair et l'esprit
Le Fantôme de la rue
 Michel-Ange
La Maison morte
Yamilé sous les cèdres
La Vie est un sport
La Petite Mademoiselle
La Peur de vivre
La Maison
La Robe de laine

Les Pierres du foyer, es-
 sai sur l'histoire lit-
 téraire de la famille
 française
Promenades en Savoie
Ménages d'après-guerre
Le Mariage, hier et au-
 jourd'hui
Voici l'heure des âmes
La Jeune fille aux oiseaux
La Nouvelle croisade des
 enfants
La Vie héroïque de Guy-
 nemer
La Jeunesse nouvelle
Trois tombes
La Chanson de Vaux-
 Douaumont
Le Maréchal Fayolle

M. E. Francis (Mrs. Blundell) :

Whither?
The Story of Dan
Among the Untrodden
 Ways
A Daughter of the Soil

Miss Erin
The Duenna of a Genius
Yeoman Fleetwood
Fiander's Widow
The Manor Farm

Christian Thal
Lynchgate Hall
Dorset Dear
Wild Wheat
Stepping Westward
Galatea of the Wheatfield
The Wild Heart
The Tender Passion
The Story of Mary
Dunne
Molly's Fortune

Dark Rosaleen
Penton's Captain
Beck of Beckford
Rosanna Dew
Renewal
Many Waters
The Runaway
Young Dave's Wife
Golden Sally
Idylls of Old Hungary

Frank H. Spearman:

The Nerve of Foley
Held for Orders
Doctor Bryson
The Daughter of a Mag-
nate
The Strategy of Great
Railroads
The Close of the Day

Whispering Smith
Robert Kimberly
The Mountain Divide
Merrilie Dawes
Nan of Music Mountain
Laramie Holds the Range
The Marriage Verdict
Selwood of Sleepy Cat

Lucille Borden:

The Candlestick Makers
The Gates of Olivet
Gentlemen Riches

The Centurion
From Out Magdala

Isabel C. Clarke:

Prisoners' Years
By the Blue River

The Secret Citadel
Fine Clay

Whose Name is Legion	Carina
Only Anne	Viola Hudson
Lamp of Destiny	Anna Nugent
The Elstones	Children of the Shadow
Julian	The Villa by the Sea
The Potter's House	The Deep Heart
Young Cymbeline	Eunice
Children of Eve	The Rest House
Ursula Finch	It Happened in Rome
Lady Trent's Daughter	Selma
Tressider's Sister	A Case of Conscience
Light on the Lagoon	The Lamp of Destiny
Average Cabins	Strangers of Rome

Elizabeth Jordan:

Tales of the City Room	Wings of Youth
Tales of the Cloister	The Girl in the Mirror
Tales of Destiny	The Blue Circle
May Iverson, Her Book	The Lady of Pentlands
Many Kingdoms	Faith Desmond's Last
May Iverson Tackles	Stand
Life	Red Riding Hood
May Iverson's Career	Miss Blake's Husband
Lovers' Knots	Black Butterflies

G. K. Chesterton:

Heretics	The Superstition of
Orthodoxy	Divorce
Tremendous Trifles	Evils of Eugenics
The Ball and the Cross	The Everlasting Man

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| The Catholic Church and
Conversion | Manalive |
| What's Wrong with the
World | The Flying Inn |
| Alarms and Discursions | The New Jerusalem |
| The Crimes of England | Tales of the Long Bow |
| A Shilling for My
Thoughts | The Return of Don
Quixote |
| A Short History of Eng-
land | The Innocence of Father
Brown |
| Irish Impressions | The Wisdom of Father
Brown |
| The Uses of Diversity | The Incredulity of Father
Brown |
| What I Saw in America | The Secret of Father
Brown |
| The Man Who Knew
Too Much | Dickens |
| Fads versus Fancies | The Victorian Age in
Literature |
| The Outline of Sanity | St. Francis of Assisi |
| Eugenics and Other
Evils | William Cobbett |
| The Napoleon of Not-
ting Hill | Robert Louis Stevenson |
| The Club of Queer
Trades | The Wild Knight |
| The Man Who Was
Thursday | Ballad of the White
Horse |
| All Things Considered | Poems |
| | The Ballad of St. Bar-
bara |
|
C. C. Martindale, S.J.: | |
| Life of R. H. Benson | Life of C. D. Plater |

Life of Bernard Vaughan
Memoir of R. P. Garrold
Memoir of R. Monteith
In God's Nursery
The Waters of Twilight
The Goddess of Ghosts
St. Christopher
Old Testament Stories
and New Testament
Stories
Jock, Jack and the Cor-
poral
Mr. Francis Newnes

Edith O'Shaughnessy:

A Diplomat's Wife in
Mexico
Diplomatic Days
My Lorraine Journal

James B. Connolly:

Out of Gloucester
The Seiners
Deep Sea's Toll
Crested Seas
An Olympic Victor
Open Water
Wide Courses
Sonnie Boy's People
The Trawler

Albert Alfred, P.C.
Bernadette of Lourdes
The Difficult Command-
ment
Christ is King
The Faith of the Roman
Church
The Kingdom and the
World
The Vocation of Aloysius
Gonzaga
The Sacramental System

Alsace in Rust and Gold
Viennese Medley
Married Life

Head Winds
Running Free
The U-Boat Hunters
Hiker Joy
Tide Rips
Steel Decks
Coaster Captain
The Book of the Glou-
cester Fishermen

William Heyliger:

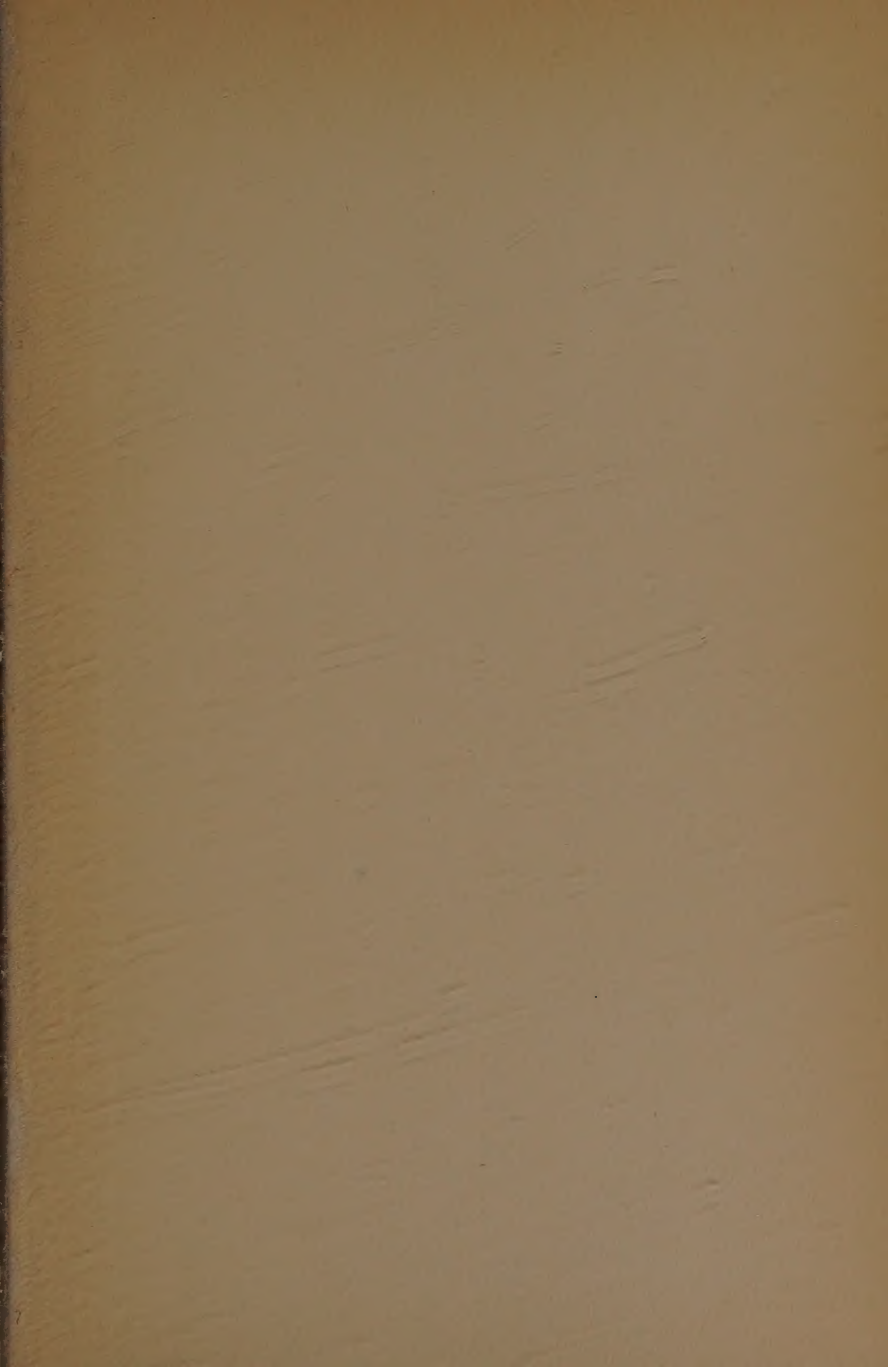
Bartley, Freshman Pitcher
 Batter Up
 Bucking the Line
 Captain of the Nine
 Five Yards to Go
 Strike Three
 Winning Hit
 Off Side
 Against Odds
 Fair Play
 Don Strong of the Wolf
 Patrol
 Captain Fair-and-Square

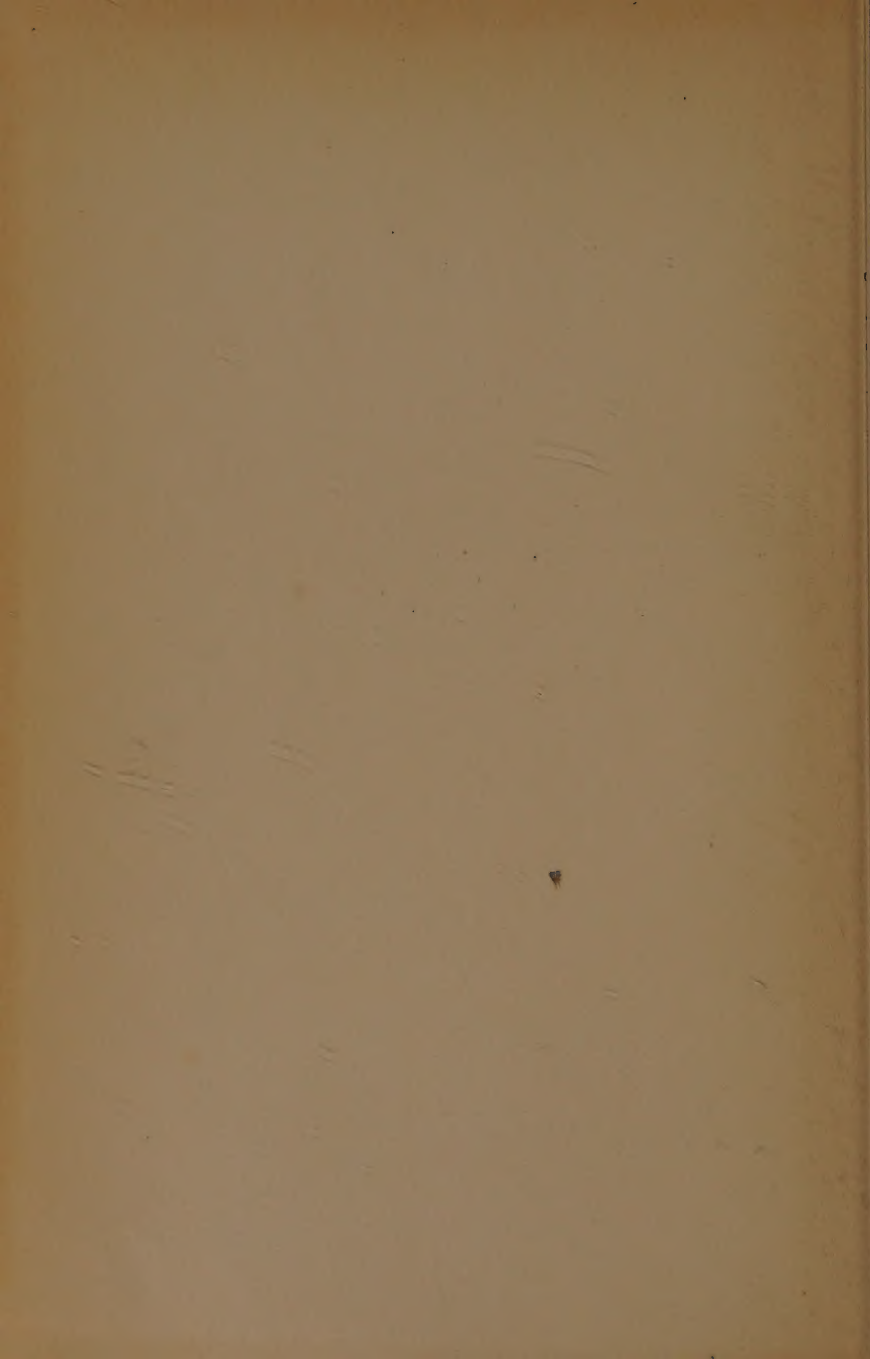
County Pennant
 Straight Ahead
 Don Strong, Patrol
 Leader
 Fighting for Fairview
 High Benton
 Don Strong, American
 High Benton, Worker
 Dan's Tomorrow
 Spirit of the Leader
 Quinby and Son
 Dorset's Twister
 The Fighting Captain

Francis J. Finn, S.J.:

Lord Bountiful
 On the Run
 Bobby in Movieland
 Facing Danger
 His Luckiest Year
 Lucky Bob
 Percy Wynn
 Tom Playfair
 Harry Dee
 Claude Lightfoot
 Ethelred Preston
 That Football Game
 That Office Boy
 Cupid of Campion

The Fairy of the Snows
 The Best Foot Forward
 Mostly Boys
 His First and Last Ap-
 pearance
 The Story of Jesus
 Ada Merton
 New Faces and Old
 But Thy Love and Thy
 Grace
 Sunshine and Freckles
 Candles' Beams
 Boys' and Girls' Prayer
 Book





NAZARETH COLLEGE OF ROCHESTER



3 2769 01 102 837